

PROPHETIC PREACHING THAT DEVELOPES A UNIQUE IDENTITY
IN AN EMERGING CHURCH SATELLITE CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

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Multi-site churches are not a new development, and have become more prevalent in recent years. Any church that endeavors to place ministries in multiple locations should have a detailed blueprint and comprehensive strategy. The goal of this research is to provide information for multi-site churches seeking to fulfill a bilateral mission. The manifestation of this mission is that each associated church campus be positively identified with its larger church body, while simultaneously being recognized for its own uniqueness. Research will engage in historical observations, biblical examples, and

theological assertions. It will also include the implementation of sermons and congregational surveys.

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It was with a gracious heart and mind that I thank God for guiding my journey during this doctoral process. The educational experience has brought me closer my family, my church, and my God.

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Many thanks to my Lewis Chapel church family, Dr. John D. Fuller, Sr., Bishop Michael A. Frencher, and participants of my focus groups. The assistance and participation you gave were invaluable.

DEDICATION

To my wife Savannah, who always believes in me.

To my father C. David, who always encourages me.

To my mother Renee, who always supports me.

To my son CJ, who has given me a deeper connection with God.

ABBREVIATIONS

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
KJV	King James Version
LC	Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church
LCW	Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church - West

INTRODUCTION

There are large varieties of Protestant Christian traditions. There are often significant differences within a given tradition. The term “Protestant” usually refers to non-Catholic churches that trace their origins to the European Reformation. Most Protestants emphasize their historical and theological continuity with the early church. They embrace their patristical roots.

Protestants can be distinguished from Roman Catholics at several points. These points include the rejection of the authority of the Pope and the absolutist claims of the Roman church, the celebration of only two sacraments, baptisms, and the administration of communion in both bread and wine. Protestants also reject certain beliefs such as the veneration of Mary, purgatory, and devotion to the saints.

Two primary branches of the protestant movement are the Baptist church and the Methodist church. They are similar in many of the aforementioned ways. However, they are very different in how they have elected to handle the concept of church governing.

For centuries Methodist churches have worked in harmony with one another. Methodist churches have established a system and a structure for doing ministry in a connected way. Many of their churches do not share the same geographical location, but they still find successful methods for maintaining connectedness with one another without being a hindrance to communities they attempt to serve. They are governed by a collection of bishops. It is the duty of the bishop to ensure every congregation has a

minister addressing the needs of the church's community. Methodist churches work collectively.

So, even though the idea of doing ministry in connection to other churches is not new, it is a foreign concept to Baptist traditions. Baptist traditions often pivot on the notion of church autonomy. In the Baptist tradition congregations generally have the authority to approve or disapprove of the direction of the church through giving a vote. Baptist pastors do not answer to anyone except their own congregation. Baptists do not have a governing body of bishops.

The researcher asserts that the Baptist church does not have to adopt the traditions of the Methodist church to successfully incorporate the multi-site church movement into its ministry lexicon. Certain elements of the multi-site church structure call for a re-envisioning of how Baptist churches can effectively do ministry. Baptists can have a shared ministerial directive across multiple church locations without becoming a pseudo-Methodist organization. This research will show you how.

Jesus compelled us to, "... Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23 NRSV)." The multi-site church structure gives the Baptist church another way to fulfill this call from Jesus. Multi-site churches can do something very effective. Instead of waiting for people to 'come,' we can proactively 'go.'

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The researcher was born in Salisbury, NC. This is where he spent the first five years of his life. His family, (including his older brother by one year Clinton, Jr. and younger sister by one year Cherie) lived in apartments called Clancy Hills. This neighborhood was not for the economically affluent. At that time Salisbury was known for having an active Ku Klux Klan membership. One morning as the Stackhouse family left the neighborhood they observed that in the cover of night the local Klan had spray painted the sign that read Clancy Hills. The sign now read Nigger Hills. That experience introduced Chris to the harsh reality of racism and prejudice. This showed him at an early age that some people were more than willing to harmfully identify and classify others.

While living in Charlotte, at the age of fourteen, the researcher had accepted his calling for the ministry. All of his life he'd been in church. One could accurately state that he was born into the church. His father, Rev. Clinton David Stackhouse, Sr., had begun pastoring when he was eighteen. As a result, some of the researcher's earliest memories involve church sanctuaries, Sunday School classes, and fellowship halls. As impetuous as it sounds, at fourteen, the researcher felt he had waited long enough to accept the God's call to ministry. C. David Stackhouse Sr. was a very well liked and respected figure in many preaching and vocational circles. In order to help his son prepare he called for the assistance of several capable friends. They helped teach and train Chris for the ministry. A bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church, a college dean, and a

seminary professor were among the people utilized to help mold the researcher's young mind and inform his fledgling ministry. Failure to prepare is preparing to fail; and Clinton, Sr. had no intentions on letting his son fail.

One particular November, shortly after the researcher celebrated his tenth birthday his mother and father called their three children into the living room to talk. They announced that the Stackhouse's were leaving their current church, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, because the researcher's father was starting his own church. At the time, the researcher's mother worked at a nice building in downtown Charlotte. The plan was to transform the basement level of the building into a sanctuary. They informed their children that the change would take place on the first of the year. The researcher didn't understand why his father was leaving his church. Clinton, Sr. seemed to be at a height of popularity, his church was busting at the seams, and he was being paid well enough.

The newly formed church was named Shepherd's Fold Church. It started out shaky. There was a period of time where there was no choir, only one usher, no musician, and a very paltry offering. Eventually the church had to relocate to another building because the church could no longer afford the rent of the downtown facility. As a teenager Chris would often think to himself that his father was crazy for leaving such a well established ministry to begin working one that had nothing in place. Already aspiring for the ministry he vowed to never make that kind of decision.

In two years time Shepherd's Fold Church had survived its initial storms, moved to a new building, and was now growing rapidly. The researcher watched his father work diligently to build a ministry from nothing into one that was vibrant. All those things that

the church once lacked it now had in abundance. The church utilized government programs that used its basement facilities as office, it had an after school program, outreach programs, and community assistance programs. Clinton, Sr. kept the researcher close because he wanted to teach him that ministry is more than preaching. Chris watched his father sacrifice for God's vision and he learned from it.

Hiding Who I Am

After entering the ministry, Chris began to attempt to find a balance between being young and being saved. Being a preacher in the ninth grade is odd. He quickly learned that teachers treat you differently, and not always in a good way. People began to hold him up to expectations that were lofty and pragmatically unreachable. Once he failed to live up to the inflicted high expectations the usual phrase was often heard uttered, "And I thought you were suppose to be a preacher."

Certain things that Chris enjoyed were deemed unsuitable. This can best be illustrated in the tapes Chris kept in his first car. Tapes have a side A and a side B. On side A Chris would put gospel songs. On side B there would be rap. He enjoyed both. The occupants of the car would unknowingly determine which side of the tape would be played. He did this because he knew most people wouldn't approve of his love of secular music. Chris could easily sing every word in a John P. Kee song; flip to side B and not skip a beat to Tupac's lyrics. Clinton, Sr., having been a boy preacher himself, understood the struggles of a young preacher to find balance. His father would often encourage him to be young and not act like an old man. He encouraged Chris to stay true to himself. He would also tell his son that one of the keys to ministry is the ability to be genuine.

Chris' social life in high school was great. He was well liked and well known in school. His ministry was thriving. As Chris continued his high school years, there was not a month that went by that didn't find him speaking in revival or a special program. On the weekends large crowds would gather to hear Minister Chris. Statements to newspapers would be given and news cameras would show up intermittingly, but when the weekdays returned Chris became careful and guarded again. He felt some people would resume to pulling out their magnifying glasses to find inconsistencies in his life. Unknowingly, Chris began to follow a mantra of, "Be who they want you to be, if only in appearance." If not, Chris was sure to hear the common chorus of, "And I thought you were suppose to be a preacher."

As a defense mechanism Chris began to keep it a secret from teachers and others that he was a preacher because he had grown weary of being expected to act perfect. Being a teenager was hard enough, but being a teenage preacher makes those growing and maturing pains more difficult and much more public. There would be times adults wanted to prove their intellectual superiority and other times where they wanted to prove their spiritual prominence. His age made him a target for various battlegrounds that some people gladly sought to engage. Chris came to understand that being in the ministry as a teenager meant he was going to have to grow up, and sooner would be much better than later.

Renaming Who I Am

It was now time for college. Chris decided to go to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, NC. The school is commonly referred to as A&T. This school was selected for two main reasons. First, the school was 1½ hours

away from Charlotte. Chris had observed a pattern that for many of his peers the decision to stay in your hometown seemed to be counterproductive. College was a time to become the man or woman your parents had been trying to prepare you to be. It was a time to learn to stand on your own two feet and find your independence. Having mom and dad so close by was seen as a hindrance to that process. Secondly, his older brother Clint, Jr. had just finished his freshman year at A&T. Being only one year apart in age the brothers were always in some sort of competition with each other. Growing up their relationship was always good, but there was always an undertone of healthy competition. If the two siblings had a theme song it would for their childhood it would be, *Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better*. So, Chris would never admit to his brother that his attendance at A&T helped him decide to go there as well.

Shortly before arriving for Chris' freshman year, he was taught something very intriguing by his brother. Apparently at A&T Clint, Jr. had changed his name. He now went by the name Ceaser. He felt the name Clint didn't fit him and began to introduce himself to everyone by this new moniker. This idea was great to Chris who had already gotten good at setting up fences to guard who he really was. A new name was just what he felt he needed.

Daavon. That was his middle name. Chris would now be called Daavon. It sounds silly that something that simple would mean anything to someone, but for Daavon it was freeing. Daavon got busy at A&T meeting people. Early after he arrived at college he went to a campus ministry function. After the gathering was over Daavon decided he wouldn't be back. He just didn't connect with the people there.

While hanging out with some of his new college friends, they began to discuss going to a step show for incoming freshmen. Daavon agreed to go. He didn't admit it to anyone but he wasn't sure exactly what a step show was. Not only had he never been to one, but he'd never heard of one. Fraternities and sororities began to take the stage and perform various steps. One fraternity in particular really stood out to Daavon. They had on red and white shirts. After inquiring, he found out that they were the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Daavon called his father to tell him about this new aspiration. Clinton, Sr. thought the idea was great. He told his son that he wanted to join that fraternity when he was in college, but because of already having a family and pastoring a church he didn't have the time. That sealed it, Daavon would be a Kappa.

It was now normal to find Daavon in the club or at some party. He would not just be at the party, but he and his friends were the life of the party. He partied more in a week than he went to church in a week. It didn't start out that way. It was a gradual and subtle process. He would party on Friday, leave for various church locations on Saturday, and preach on Sunday.

The lines that separated Daavon from a minister and someone who had no ministerial responsibilities was becoming increasingly vague. Daavon's little sister Cherie decided to join her brothers at college in Greensboro, NC. She opted to go to UNC Greensboro instead of A&T. Periodically Daavon would stop by her campus and check on his sister. One day as Daavon left his sisters room she ended their time together by saying, "I'm praying for you." Daavon thought to himself, "Why did she say that?" He wasn't offended, but it did catch him off guard. From that day forward when their time

together would come to an end Cherie would state, "I'm praying for you." Daavon didn't see how much his ministry was in jeopardy, but his sister did.

One Thursday night during Daavon's junior year of college, he came into his apartment late. It was 2:30am. He went into his bedroom and was soon fast asleep. Around 3:30am his phone rang. Daavon answered to find out that his cousin Cyé had shot himself in the head. Cyé was extremely close with Clint, Jr. and Daavon. They spent many summers together. Cyé and Daavon were also the same age which made their bond even stronger. Over the past few years Cyé had drastically changed. Cyé's parents had gotten a divorce four years prior to this incident and Cyé never came to terms with it. He rebelled against his father and began to skip school. He started to sell drugs and use them. At one point he was hospitalized because he smoked marijuana that was laced with an unknown substance. After that incident Cyé was never the same. He became secluded and paranoid. His personality shifted and he morphed into a shell of his former self. After hanging up the phone Daavon met with his siblings. They rode together to visit Cyé in the hospital in Charlotte. Cyé wasn't deceased, but the outlook was very grim. As Daavon drove to Charlotte he realized that not only had being at A&T allowed him to keep ministerial responsibilities at bay, but it kept having to face his struggling cousin at bay as well.

When the Stackhouse children arrived at the intensive care unit they were told that Cyé was not going to survive. The rest of the family was already there in the waiting room. It was silent. There were no words exchanged, no phrases to lighten the heavy moment, and no spoken regret. It was just the quiet sound of muffled cries as hearts broke. Clint, Jr. admonished Daavon to go into the room with him so they could see Cyé.

Daavon reluctantly agreed and into the room the two went. The two brothers looked at their beloved cousin as he lay barely clasp to life. Cye's head was heavily bandaged and the monitors beeped and buzzed. As the two brothers stood there Clint, Jr. asked Daavon to pray. Daavon mustered a prayer as tears began to fall down the cheeks of the two young men. They stayed there. As they watched their beloved cousin, he drifted away. That night Cye passed.

At the funeral Clint, Jr. mourned openly, but not Daavon. Daavon was on program to read scripture and pray. He did so with his usual acumen. After the funeral Clint, Jr. asked his brother how he could be so calm. For Daavon compartmentalizing was easy, he did it every day. Daavon had suppressed all his hurt, grief, and sorrow, but it wouldn't stay there forever.

Three months after the funeral Daavon was preaching at a church. Everything was going well until Daavon began to invite people to come to Christ following his sermon. He began to tell the youth in attendance that it's good to give your life to Christ. He told them that the coolest person he'd ever known was saved. He informed them that this person had given his life to Christ and didn't care who knew it. Daavon stated, "Being saved doesn't mean you're perfect. My cousin Cye wasn't perfect, but he was saved. He was saved." After saying those words, the damns that once held Daavon's suppressed sorrow in check broke. Right in front of the entire congregation Daavon began to cry so much he couldn't finish giving the invitation and someone else had to take over.

Clinton, Sr. sensed that his son's ministry was in crisis. The years of Daavon neglecting his ministerial call were continuing its negative effect. Clinton, Sr. always made his pulpit available to his son. Daavon was invited to preach at least once every

month. Daavon was now a few months away from graduating from A&T. For the last two months Daavon had declined his father's offer to preach at Shepherd's Fold Church.

Daavon knew that he had no right preaching to anybody. Truth be told, at that point in his life he felt bad even walking into the church. He felt like a hypocrite. As a result, Daavon began to make excuses why he couldn't preach at his father's church. He would tell his father that he was having trouble writing a sermon. He classified it as sermonic writers block. His father would retort, "Well, come home and we'll write it together." With reluctance Daavon would do as his father asked. It was obvious that Clinton, Sr. was not going to let Daavon give up on his calling.

There had to be a turning point where either his ministry would completely die or it would be resurrect. The summer of 2003 would bring about that point. Although his ministry had suffered Daavon had become quite popular in college. He had plenty of friends, an apartment, a nice car, and a girlfriend. After graduating in December of 2002, Daavon could not find employment. As the summer approached he was delinquent on his car payments. The car was repossessed. He could not afford his apartment. He was given a month to move out. His relationship ended. When people heard of his series of misfortune they laughed. It turned out that Daavon didn't have as many friends as he thought.

Daavon moved back to Charlotte to live with his parents a defeated young man. When he arrived at their house he somberly retreated to his old bedroom. Night had fallen and the faint chirps of crickets could be heard outside the bedroom window. Daavon had returned home to Charlotte with almost nothing. He'd gotten his heartbroken, he was betrayed by some people he thought were his friends, he had no apartment, no car, and he

had no job. Everything that Daavon built had been broken, shattered, or destroyed in some fashion. The life that he'd built was as much of a farce as the persona he had lived.

Defeated. That is the word that played like a broken record in his mind. He sat on the floor in his old bedroom. He realized the persona of Daavon and everything it embodied was gone. Yet, all was not completely lost. A new thought began to resonate deep from within. There was still something he had. It was weak from neglect and on life support. He still had his ministry. Essentially, Daavon's lifestyle died so Chris could be in ministry again.

That dark room became Chris' resurrection tomb. Satan had almost succeeded in trouncing Chris' true love, the ministry of God. Chris received the message loud and clear. The ministry is what matters. It was too late to go to seminary. Before he graduated from high school Chris had a clear ministry plan. This plan included going straight from college to seminary. Fortunately, he was able to apply and be accepted into Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

Finding Who I Am

In 2006, the researcher's mentor introduced him to a deacon and trustee from a church in a small town called Burgaw, NC. The church was called Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. For the first two Sunday's in January 2007, the researcher met with that congregation and preached. By April they asked him to be the pastor of the church. The researcher prayed about it. Even though he had a desire to pastor, he knew this decision needed to be led by God. After prayerful consideration he accepted the request of the church and became their pastor.

Clinton, Sr. suggested that his son move to Burgaw to effectively pastor the church. The drive from where the researcher currently lived to Burgaw was two hours long. Clinton, Sr. told his son that in order to be an effective pastor you have to be a pastor who is present. The researcher protested this idea initially. Burgaw is a very rural area. There were four stop lights in the entire town. The researcher grew up in the city and never considered himself a country boy.

After giving the move much consideration and prayer, the researcher moved into the church parsonage in Burgaw. It was so close to the church he could walk from the front door of the parsonage to the front door of the church in one minute. As he began to pastor, he noticed an unhealthy pattern. It would manifest itself when certain individuals didn't agree with him. The un-agreeable party would imply that because of their seniority in age, they were right and he was inherently wrong. It should have been no surprise to the researcher because his age had been an issue with some people for the entirety of his ministry.

A plan was devised by the young pastor. He would emulate his father. Perhaps this would validate him to those who opposed him. He began to do what he thought his father would do. He would say what he thought his father would say. As he continued the implementation of this strategy he found himself in one particular counseling session. A member was having issues due to a series of bad decision they made. While counseling, the researcher tried to say what he thought his father say. After doing his best Clinton, Sr. impression, he'd wasted an hour in utter ineffectiveness. In a moment of clarity he said what he felt led to say. His words were direct and to the point. They were surprisingly

well received. The only way his pastoral ministry was going to progress was if he followed his own God given path.

As the researcher busied himself in his third year of ministry at Mount Pisgah, his mentor, John D. Fuller, asked to have lunch with him. At the lunch, Dr. Fuller shocked the researcher and told him that after much prayer he'd concluded that he needed his help. Dr. Fuller had started a second campus location for Lewis Chapel. It was not doing well and he believed the researcher's ministry could be a great help. He also informed the researcher that he wanted his pastoral aid at the main church location. He informed the researcher that if he came to Lewis Chapel he would not be his assistant, but rather he would be co-pastor. This offer came as a complete surprise. The researcher loved his ministry in Burgaw. More to the point, the researcher loved the people of Mount Pisgah. They were very dear to him. For the next 7 months, The researcher would wrestle with this decision. Ultimately, he concluded that this was the next step in ministry that God was calling him to. This ministerial move meant that every Sunday the researcher was now in two church locations. Lewis Chapel at 8:30am in Fayetteville, NC. Then for the 11:00am worship he travels twenty minutes to Raeford, NC to conduct worship at Lewis Chapel West.

This brought the researcher, and his new wife, to Fayetteville. Lewis Chapel continues to move in a Godly direction. There is less foundational work with that congregation. Before the researcher arrived they already boasted a membership of over four thousand people. The ministry that causes the most excitement in the researcher's life was the new satellite campus, Lewis Chapel West. The first Sunday the researcher arrived there to start pastoring there were five people in attendance. That number was

including the researcher and his wife. In less than one year, God has increased the membership with such an abundance that the small sanctuary ran out of room and they had to construct an addition to the building. Every Sunday now finds the ushers attempting to find new ways to fit in extra chairs for the incoming worshippers.

This Church's Origins

As long as man has inhabited earth they have believed that there is something greater at work than themselves. Human has persistently believed that there is more to life than what one can physically see or ascertain. Ancient hieroglyphics and Sanskrit writings show that primordial man would look to the sky in efforts to connect to celestial deities. History also shows us that for as long as humankind has walked earth they have assembled for spiritual rituals and worship. Today mankind has made far reaching advances in technology. People's wealth of knowledge of earthly things has greatly increased. Yet, just like the ancient ancestors who have gone before them, humankind still looks to connect with a being that is higher than themselves.

The congregation of Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church West follows in the ancient and unrelenting call to gather and worship. This body of believers looks toward the heavens and call to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. This writing will explore the dynamics of this congregation. There will be an examination of the history of this congregation, the church's community, congregation makeup, the congregation's worldview, and its identity.

The history of this church is unique. Lewis Chapel West is very new while simultaneously being very old. Lewis Chapel West was founded July 5, 2009. The church was birth out of the vision of John D. Fuller, Sr. At the time of the church's inception

Fuller had been pastoring Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Fayetteville, NC for thirty-five years. Under the direction of God a satellite campus to the original church was established in the neighboring Hoke County. This satellite campus was named Lewis Chapel West because of its western proximity to the original church. Thusly, one finds in Lewis Chapel West a fledgling ministry with ties to a church that on March 20, 2011 celebrated its one hundredth year anniversary and has a member of four thousand people. Having a mother church dynamic enabled Lewis Chapel West to have the appeal of newness with the resources of an established ministry.

For the first year of Lewis Chapel West's existence it floundered and struggled to grow. Most congregants opted to attend the larger and more established church in Fayetteville. Lewis Chapel West was supposed to be positively affecting its community of Raeford, NC (Hoke County), but it was failing to make a communal connection. Attendance in the first year of Lewis Chapel West never grew past a consistent number of five worshippers on Sunday.

However, the dynamics of Lewis Chapel West were about to make a big shift. Fuller reached out to a long time family friend to come and be a part of a new pastoral team he was putting together. He invited Christopher D. Stackhouse to join him at Lewis Chapel in Fayetteville as well as pastor Lewis Chapel West in Raeford. Stackhouse understood that his primary task would be building a congregation at Lewis Chapel West. Stackhouse accepted the challenge and he began to work on ministry and congregation building.

What kind of community is Lewis Chapel West in? The first thing Stackhouse had to do was ascertain the answer that question. One must understand the community

that their congregation intends to reach to make an effective connection. North Carolina is one of the oldest states in the United States. However, Hoke County is a relatively new county. Raeford was founded in a cotton field in 1898. Subsequently the county was established in 1911. The area was very rural. The majority of the population consisted of Caucasians. Knowing there was a need for blacks to have their own place of worship, a group of African-Americans established the Seventy-First Community Church.¹ For many years Raeford remained lightly populated and rural. Presently, livestock no longer outnumber people and the need for ministry has greatly increased.

The area where Lewis Chapel West is located places it firmly in the heart of a new boom in population growth.² This growth is expected to continue as well as increase overtime. The latest United States Census has found that Hoke County is the fastest growing area in the state.³ The area is still small, but according to statistics urban sprawl is inevitable. The population of Hoke County currently stands at 47, 298 people. That number is not very substantial until you factor in the population of its neighboring county of Cumberland which is 319,431.⁴ Although Lewis Chapel West's goal is to affect its immediate community, the reality of post-modern ministry in era of socialized media is that "neighborhood" extends past what is in walking distance.

¹ Joyce Monroe, *Images of America: Hoke County* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 105. The community church was later named Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church.

² Office of State Budget and Management. "US Census," Population Growth, http://www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures/socioeconomic_data/population_estimates/demog/2010provgrowthmig.pdf (accessed April 25, 2011)

³ Office of State Budget and Management. "US Census," County Growth, www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures/socioeconomic_data/population_estimates/demog/countygrowth_prov_2010.html (accessed April 25, 2011), *see figure A*.

⁴ Office of State Budget and Management. "US Census," Population Overview, www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures/socioeconomic_data/population_estimates/demog/countytotals_populationoverview.html (accessed April 25, 2011), *see figure B*.

Stackhouse took a drive around Raeford to familiarize himself with his new community.⁵ Most of the population works in Fayetteville instead of Raeford. Fortunately, the church is close to the main road travelers take in order to get into Fayetteville. This gives Lewis Chapel West good visibility and accessibility. As Stackhouse traveled the city he took note of many new housing developments as well as new businesses. Located less than one mile from the church, in opposite directions, one will find several acres of land where two new hospitals will soon be built. Raeford is currently the largest county in its state without its own hospital. Lewis Chapel West has firmly situated itself in the middle of what is quickly becoming a busy intersection of commerce and living.

A growing community is a community that is in constant flux. *Studying Congregations* asserts that a community has layers. They use a three-layer conceptualization tactic to understand community.⁶ The first layer is demography. Lewis Chapel West serves a diverse community. It is a unique mixture of urban and rural people. It is common to find people in this community who ride their own horse in fellowship with those who have never been to a farm. There was a time when race weighed heavily on this community and its relationships.⁷ Groups like the Ku Klux Klan once shaped the formula of community, but not anymore. It is common to have multi-

⁵ Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 49.

⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁷ Monroe, *Images of America*, 13.

cultural worship settings. Caucasians make-up the majority of the population, but the community is diverse.⁸

The second community layer is culture. Raeford is in the heart of the Bible Belt. Church is its own culture in the south. The landscape of this community is decorated with churches both big and small. The oldest churches in this community are Presbyterian.⁹ However, denominational ties in this community are not as strong as one might think. Many people who grew up in this community went to more than church in a given month. When Raeford was very rural and its churches were pastored by men who had more than one parish at the same time. Most pastors of that time would have church with one congregation on first and third Sundays. Then on second and fourth Sundays he would worship with his second parish. So, the culture of church is deep rooted in this community, but not the loyalty to denominations.

The recent growth and development has resulted in a community that was once traditional, morphing into a nontraditional collection of people. The landscape is no longer filled with crop fields and abandoned farms. Those fields are becoming business hubs and housing centers. In the past, night skies were dark, which allowed all the stars to be seen with clarity. One now finds night skies illuminated with lights from homes and businesses.

The third community layer is organization. Fort Bragg Military Base is a major factor in the organization of this community. It is the largest army base in the United States. The border to the base touches and extends past Fayetteville and Raeford. Raeford is a military town. Which means that of most people in this community are either in the

⁸ reference Table 1.1

⁹ Ibid., 2.

military or have ties to the military. The median salary for Raeford is 44,900, but that does not factor in military pay. As most of the nation suffered from the recession of 2008, the Raeford community didn't because so many of its citizens were employed through the military. The primary reason for the Hoke County's boom in population is the expansion of Fort Bragg.¹⁰ Many citizens of Raeford are direct and to the point. They are generally organized and know how to follow leadership. This is the result when the majority of one's population is military oriented.

The congregational makeup of Lewis Chapel West is worthy of exploration.¹¹ When Stackhouse arrived at Lewis Chapel West the attendance of five people began to grow. Often, the longer a pastor leads a congregation the more influence he has on how that congregation looks and how it identifies itself. This situation was unique. Stackhouse and the congregation of Lewis Chapel West would literally have to grow together. Meaning, prior to his arrival there was no established membership or church culture for him to familiarize himself with. Those things were yet to be established. It became Stackhouse's task to create a congregational direction.

As a result of Lewis Chapel West's smaller size, the congregation is being comprised of worshippers who desire an intimate worship setting. Some of the members feel a smaller setting helps facilitate a sense of community where you know the people who you worship with. The people who have joined the church are primarily young adults ranging from the age of sixteen to forty five. There are senior citizens in the church as well. There are several young married couples and single mothers. The congregation is comfortable with straying from tradition. They will sing hymn songs, but they also expect

¹⁰ reference Table 1.2

¹¹ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 14.

that on any given Sunday the usual order of worship will be unusual arranged.

Stackhouse understands that many of the churches young adults did not grow up in church. The classic Biblical narratives about Noah's ark and Daniel's lion den are not very familiar to this new crowd. The congregation's unfamiliarity with old traditions may be a direct result of why they connected with a church that worships in a nontraditional building. Which may also factor into the congregation's divergence from the usual visual cues for worship that people who grew up in church often need. In one way or another all worshipers need to consume visual artifacts to establish a sense of being in a worship setting.¹² Stain glass windows, massive altars, raised pulpits, and lofty choir stands are some of the common visual worship cues. Growing up with these visual triggers can results in a dependence or need for them to be present in order for a church setting to be established. Congruently, if you grew up without them your dependence on their visual worship cues is lessened.

Leadership outside of the pulpit is important. Because Lewis Chapel West is part of a larger congregation in Fayetteville both congregations share officers. Deacons, trustees, and ushers are bi-congregational. However, most of the church workers of Lewis Chapel do not attend worship at Lewis Chapel West. That made it very important for Lewis Chapel West to have present leadership from its own congregational body.¹³ Lewis Chapel West has two deacons who are very dedicated to the ministry. Its trustees are part of a larger finance team comprised of both churches. Status of political power is not an issue because it is understood that officers work with a larger group and ultimately for a higher power.

¹² Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 90.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 66.

The congregation's worldview is comprised of all four types given by *Studying Congregations*.¹⁴ However, the most prevalent is worldview is the Romantic. This worldview purports that everyone is the protagonist in their own story, but they still need of a hero in Jesus. As protagonist there is an antagonist in the devil. The congregation feels that the story of their life can either be saved by Jesus or ruined by the devil.

Finally, how does the congregation of Lewis Chapel West identify itself? Don Browning calls the process of helping a congregation gain a realistic picture of itself, its situation, and its possibilities "descriptive theology."¹⁵ From the time someone enters this world they are defined. Ultimately through the defining processes of life one gains an identity. It is important for a person to know how to identify themselves apart from what they've been defined as. The identity of Lewis Chapel West is that it's new and that it dares to be different. As the congregation continues to grow its identity will evolve. It is important that this identity be Christ-like and God centered. The congregation cannot submit the authority to chart its own path to others. Through being self defined Lewis Chapel West can maintain the power of controlling its own identity.

Bringing It Together

The past can inform the present. Furthermore, the experiences of one's journey have the ability to equip them for events that have yet to come, but are surely on the way. Christoppher Daavon Stackhouse's *Spiritual Autobiography* illustrates how ones past can prepare them for their future. Understanding the Contextual Analysis of Stackhouse's ministry there are several overlapping areas of interest. Those connecting interest lead to

¹⁴ Ibid., 96-97. Worldviews: Comic, Romantic, Tragedy, Ironic

¹⁵ Ibid., 173.

specific aims for the research of professional and personal places of ministerial growth. The two greatest areas of conversation are in how his father's ministry shaped his ministerial view, and how his struggle with identity informs his pastoral direction.

Stackhouse came uniquely prepared for his congregation's context. Chris' formative years in ministry were essentially his training grounds.¹⁶ It was noted in his *Spiritual Autobiography* that when Chris was a boy, his father Clinton pastored a thriving ministry called Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. Tabernacle Baptist Church had roughly two hundred members when Clinton, Sr. arrived. After six years of toiling in the ministry at Tabernacle the membership grew to well over seven hundred. The local news paper, *The Charlotte Observer*, recognized the church as one of the fastest growing churches in Charlotte. Plans began to be discussed for a new church building because the existing one had been outgrown. In an act of obedience to God Clinton left Tabernacle to found a church called Shepherd's Fold Church.

Chris watched his father make that difficult decision. He saw his father put ministry before money and before the love of a crowd. Chris would have to make a very similar decision. If he was going to pastor Lewis Chapel West it would come at the expense of leaving a thriving ministry at Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. Not only was Mount Pisgah's ministry doing well under Chris' leadership, but the membership had grown to one of the largest in its area. Would the lure of what was established and easier be enough to keep Chris from delving into the uncharted waters of Lewis Chapel West. No. Chris had the courage to leave Mount Pisgah because he'd seen his father's obedience to God's call and learned from it.

¹⁶ Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 39-40.

Shepherd's Fold started in the basement of a building. Learning how to transform a nontraditional worship space can be a daunting and intimidating task. Ministry can often be easier when it's in the usual constructs of "church." Clinton grew Shepherd's Fold through creating an environment of worship and fellowship. Worship was important, but fellowship was also a key. Where there is no fellowship community suffers. This leads to disjointedness and an absence of desire to be present. When one feels a connection, there becomes a longing for that connection. Fellowship brings that connection and that connection empowers worship. Lewis Chapel West is located in a renovated business. Chris observed that after worship was over people would leave almost immediately. There was no fellowship. He could recognize this need because he'd seen it before in Shepherd's Fold neophyte days. Thankfully, not only had his background allowed him to recognize this problem but it had also equipped him to remedy it. Chris began to give Lewis Chapel West activities, outings, contest, programs, and eating events. As fellowship grew, membership grew.

When Chris arrived at Lewis Chapel West they had no choir or musician. He had to develop a worship model based in his present context.¹⁷ Chris' past had prepared him for this. When the Shepherd's Fold ministry began there were times when a musician would be scheduled to come and not show up. Clinton had commonly used these unscripted moments as something for the congregation to rally around. Rather than shrink from adversity in worship Chris had learned to embrace it and turn it into something to further give God thanks for. Ever hurdle became a rallying cry for greater worship. No music today? No problem. No church bulletins today? No problem. Congregants of

¹⁷ Ibid., 164-165.

Lewis Chapel West grew to expect the unexpected and the membership grew without a need for things to always be the same.

Shepherd's Fold membership on its first Sunday under ten people. A lesson Chris learned was a minister should not expect his ministry to grow just because he is there. Clinton built Shepherd's Fold through community involvement and something he called Contact Ministry. Contact ministry meant that everyone that entered the doors of Shepherd's Fold received some form of contact from the pastor. The method of contact was not always the same, but the goal was to reach out to all worshippers. It was believed that many people had a simple desire of want to know their presence in worship was appreciated. At Lewis Chapel West, Chris quickly implemented his own contact ministry. All visitors receive contact through a phone call, letter, email or text messaging. The rise of technology enables for a greater variety of options and an improvement in contacting techniques.¹⁸

The activity of critical reflection can be cathartic.¹⁹ Especially if one knows its goal is to survey past actions in an attempt to glean lessons. Chris' Autobiography is ripe with teachable moments. Many of those moments meet at a common theme of having a healthy self identity.

When Chris started his ministry at fifteen years old there were many times he choose to keep his identity as a preacher hidden. This was because he struggled to meet the expectations that others would readily place on him. It took him many years of struggling with that issue before he could be comfortable being true to himself. At Lewis

¹⁸ Ibid., 21-22. A system in which trainers develop workers for future responsibilities.

¹⁹ Ibid., 77.

Chapel West there has been an influx of members who don't fit the usual model of church goers. This group consists of people with tattoos, local rappers, and those that don't don the usual church apparel. Chris preaches a message that God made you unique for a reason. If you spend your energy hiding who you really are, you cannot fulfill who God wants you to be. Come as you are. That means more than just having a casual dress code.

In Sanders' *Jesus and Judaism*, he examines Jesus' claims towards the Kingdom. He feels that through the promises of an immanently coming Kingdom Jesus wished to impart hope.²⁰ There was an ambiguity to understanding the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed. The kingdom was at times taken to be a physical Kingdom that was to come. For some this was a Kingdom to be renewed on earth by God's hand.²¹ Sanders does not feel Jesus was speaking for a Kingdom made by masons or one that would float in midair. Sanders leaves the term new 'Kingdom' and employs the term new temple. He asserts that this new temple has no analogies that would properly bring its full idea to life.

Lewis Chapel (the mother church) has the reputation of being a church for the wealthy. So, Lewis Chapel West by association received that same reputation. Lewis Chapel West is located near several impoverished neighborhoods that were not being ministered to. If that was going to change Chris would have to be an agent of that change.²² Before the church could evangelize to their neighbors they needed a renewed concept of God's kingdom. After graduating from college Chris suffered the loss of

²⁰ E. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 228. The hope that Jesus imparted was even to those who had already died. The fact that he felt it would take place 'in the air' speaks to its clear cosmic and spiritual nature.

²¹ Ibid., 229. This comes from the reference to the verse in Mark 14:58 which states, a kingdom not made with hands.

²² Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, 140.

almost all his processions. It caused him to see God's kingdom from a new perspective. To be blessed no longer meant to have mammon. He arrived at Lewis Chapel West understanding it was important that the church reached out to everyone. Including those who were not of prominent financial standing. As the reached out it had to do so with an understanding of what being blessed was. Chris taught that being blessed is not found in the presence of material gain, but it is found in the presence of God in your life. The mantra of the congregation became, "My identity is not in what I have, but it is in Christ."

Single mothers are an integral part of Chris' ministry. His sister was a single mother and that profoundly shaped his determination to make church an environment that does not ostracize women or ridicule people for perceived mistakes. People are more than what you see. At Lewis Chapel West single mothers find a congregation that does not stand in judgment, but is welcoming with a warm embrace. Chris teaches that part of knowing your identity is gaining an understanding of your value in Christ. If you know your value you will be able to recognize when things don't belong in your life. Thus, allowing you to make better decisions in the future.

Christopher Stackhouse brings to his congregational context a background that was essentially tailor made for Lewis Chapel West. He spent his teenage years helping grow a fledgling ministry. When he arrived at Lewis Chapel West it was in its infancy stages. Chris spent his formative years wrestling with issues of having a healthy self identity. Now, he ministers to a congregation of people searching for a new identity in Christ. Lastly, Stackhouse had to find his own voice, but didn't want to do it at the expense of losing the close relationship with his father. He now attempts to help Lewis

Chapel – West find its voice while staying in connection with its parent body. It is amazing how God trains his disciples, even when they are unaware of it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF ART IN THIS MINISTRY FOCUS

Who am I? Who are we? It can take much more than a mirror to answers those types of questions. Early in life we begin to spend our adolescent years attempting to fit in with the crowd and not stand out. This time is commonly spent by teenagers who wear their hair and clothes in the most popular fashion. They dare not go against the grain. These are formative years. This means, these teenagers risk becoming adults who have no identity outside of what has been collectively shaped.

It is possible to become so ingrained in the perceived collective norm of society that we lose our individuality. This is true for people as well as our churches. To be unique can unfortunately be equated with being strange. To do what is common is typically viewed as being normal. Satellite churches cannot afford to be typical for the sake of being normal. Satellite campus churches must dare to be different. This researcher sought out resources that could aid in showing the advantages of a satellite church that embraces its own unique identity through ministry and preaching.

Below is a list of books and literature that helped the researcher formulate this project:

The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations by Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird: This book gives a list of what they have

identified as the five models for multi-site churches.¹ The Video-Venue model is used to create one or more on-campus environments that use video cast sermons. These sermons can be live feeds or pre-recorded. Churches in this model share sermon lessons, but often vary in worship style.

The second model described is the Regional-Campus model.² Multi-site churches in this model have the ability to replicate the experience of the original campus in its new locations. They expand with the goal of bringing a certain brand of worship or ministry to a new geographic community.

Thirdly, some multi-site churches follow the Teaching-Team model.³ This model has its strength in leveraging a strong teaching team across multiple locations. This team can have primary functions at only one site, or they can have teaching duties that span across multiple sites. This model does not ask an individual leader to be responsible for all church site growth and development. It follows a simple thought that, “You use more people to reach more people.”

The fourth model is called the Partnership model.⁴ Initially one might conclude that multi-site churches in the partnership model have teamed together with other churches. Although that is correct, it is not inclusive of the full scope of what the partnership model utilizes. Churches in the partnership model come together with other churches, local businesses, or nonprofit organizations. There are certain scenarios where local business recognize their community can be aided by having a multi-site church in

¹ Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 30-40.

² Ibid., 32-36.

³ Ibid., 36-37.

⁴ Ibid., 37-39.

their community. In recognizing this, businesses give financial assistance so that the church can become an active presence in its new community. When nonprofit organizations partner with multi-site churches it is often because the multi-site church is in need of a place to worship. Nonprofits become aware of this need and offer to allow the multi-site church availability to their space.

The final model that Surratt, Ligon, and Bird identify is the Low-Risk model.⁵ In these instances a church has the option to start a multi-site location because of the simplicity of programming. There is already a structure in place, and the new satellite campus merely steps in to run it. Low-risk models also have low financial investments involved. As a result, the success or failure of the new campus will not be a burden on the other site(s). Low-risk models are the most sought after model by many churches considering doing multi-site ministry because they are the easiest to transition into and out of.

The researcher believes that understanding a church's identity is imperative. *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movements Next Generation* by Scott McConnell: Speaks specifically to the difficulty of identifying your church.⁶ McConnell calls for church leaders and layman to look at their churches honestly. He asserts that most people look at their church with rose-colored glasses. The best way to improve your church is to understand what it excels at, and what it fails in.

McConnell recalls when first-generation multi-site churches discovered a concept called a church's DNA. Ministries attempted to transfer their DNA to their new sites.

⁵ Ibid., 39-40.

⁶ Scott McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation* (Nashville.: B&H Books, 2009), 50.

Many of them ran into issues with this attempt because if you don't know what your DNA is, you don't know what to transfer. McConnell gave readers another acronym to follow. It's called the 'IVE.'⁷

The 'I' stands for identity. Who is your church?⁸ The church's beliefs should be the foundation. Theologically, a church should be clear about what they believe. Does your church believe in the Trinity, communion, and baptisms. These are example of core beliefs that should be prevalent at any church-site attempting to share an identity. Churches should also share in vision. Part of the church's identity is in what it envisions itself doing the future. Knowing who you are presently also involves knowing where it is you aspire to go. What does your church seek to do? Who do they seek to help?

McConnell gives some questions that can help you find your churches identity are:

- What words do people use frequently to describe your church?
- What attributes, characteristics, or programs is your church known for?
- Whom has God called your church to reach?
- Is there a common thread as to the types of changes God brings to people's lives through your church?
- What stories do people tell about your church?
- Does your church have a tag line? Do people use it?

The 'V' is understood to mean values.⁹ McConnell ask, "What matters to your church?" This question is not meant to incite a call to upholding the ten commandments. The questions concerning a church's values is meant to cause reflection on what missions do your involve itself in. There are often certain types of concerns a church gravitates

⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁸ Ibid., 52-58.

⁹ Ibid., 58-59.

towards. If you are wondering what values are important to your church, McConnell suggest that you ask yourself these questions:

What does your church celebrate and get the most excited about?
 What makes the culture of your church distinctive?
 How does your church define success?
 What element, when missing, makes a church activity feel empty?
 What are the important things that are communicated to people want to get involved in your church?

Finally, the 'E' in McConnell's IVE, stands for expression. The beliefs of your church should be concrete. The values of your church will sporadically become nuanced. The expressions of a church will change constantly.¹⁰ Expressions change with time and with generations. This is done by a church to remain relevant to a new generation. It is employed by churches to modify effectiveness. At times multi-sites will be intentional about changes its mode expression. Other times, expressions change organically as a result of spiritual growth within a congregation.

As time passes, churches find more effective ways of doing the things that matter to them. Understanding a better process increases the opportunity for ministry to spend more time on the things it deems essential.¹¹ A church seeking to open a new site-church can potentially do avoiding the pitfalls they had to overcome. McConnell request that you ask yourself these questions if you want to identify your church's expressions:

What are the practices that have worked best in each of your ministry areas?
 What is your church's ministry process?
 Which functions are primary and which are secondary in the process?
 Why have these methods been effective?

Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movements Next Generation, also speaks to the importance of keeping multi-site churches connected. Churches must find a way to

¹⁰ Ibid., 63-64.

¹¹ Ibid., 64-65.

interact with one another. This is something that the churches must be intentional about.¹²

Find ways that cause different campuses to intersect. Familiarity amongst campuses breeds a healthy sense of unity. A team concept builds with congregants as well as a feeling of family. Based on proximity, church sites should plan monthly, quarterly, and annual gatherings that involve all locations. This means that every location is included in the projects and programs of the other.

It is healthy for each church site to know they are equal. It should not matter if one site is larger than the other.¹³ McConnell acknowledges that in some scenarios one site can begin to feel inferior to another. He says that a church site can suffer from ‘low self-esteem.’ Let every campus know they bring value to the collection of campuses. Consider not having a ‘main’ campus. Avoid nomenclature such as ‘the big church.’

Access the spiritual temperature. This is specifically for those multi-site churches who share the same preacher. Preachers, if you are going to preach the same message to multiple church sites, consider the context of each place.¹⁴ The spiritual temperature of one place may call for addressing a certain need or problem. The goal is to address the spiritual needs of each congregation.

In Surratt’s, Ligon’s, and Bird’s aforementioned *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*, like McConnell, they also address the notion of a church’s DNA. They believe five ministries comprise what should be reproduced in a church. They list worship experience first. They feel that worship is a reproductive element. Second on the list is small groups. Missions comes third. Fourth is

¹² Ibid., 206-207.

¹³ Ibid., 207.

¹⁴ Ibid., 209.

student ministry. Last is children's ministry.¹⁵ They believe in DNA carriers. They purport that effective leadership is key in transferring good qualities from one church to another. They do not believe that one leadership style is more successful than another. They do suggest that regardless of the style a leader subscribes to, they must be effective at conveying a shared vision to congregants at all church sites.

Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird also wrote *A Multi-Site Church Roadtrip: Exploring the New Normal*. This work spoke to the importance of contextualizing the community. Every community is not the same. The needs of one community may not be the needs of another.¹⁶ Understanding your community can help you effectively reach that community. Multi-site churches should not make the mistake of trying to do ministry in place in the identical fashion it has done ministry at other sites. The ministry that successfully connects a church to a community, does so because it addresses a particular context. Rural, suburban, and inner city areas all come with differing context. Finding effective ways to work within these contexts only comes through carefully examining each community context. Once you have observed a community, you should know where its largest areas of need are.

A question posed to the researcher was, "Why have a church campus instead of a church plant?" *Multi-Site Church Roadtrip* specifically addresses this question. The idea of one church in multiple locations generally mean that church sites share a common vision, leadership, and budget. A campus that has its own vision, leadership, and budget has readied itself to be a church plant. If a church is thinking about starting a campus or a

¹⁵ Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 128-129.

¹⁶ Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Roadtrip: Exploring the New Normal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 30-40.

plant they should consider a few questions.¹⁷ First, what is the gift of the leadership you are considering for the new church location? Campus pastors work with the shared vision of the collection church sites. It is their responsibility to develop a sense of collective effort toward an overarching goal. Church plant pastors have their own vision. They develop a vision that is specific solely to their own location. Ask yourself secondly, what is the proximity of the new entity to an existing campus? If the new site is a short distance from your existing church site, it's better to develop it as a campus. Keep in mind that campuses share resources. Sharing resources in close proximity will alleviate the need to compete for the resources of that shared area. Thirdly, ask what the level of resource investment is desired. Church plants require less of a financial investment. Not only do they have their own leadership and vision, but they also have their own budget. Planting a church may call for an investment, but establishes a campus requires a total buy in.

Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing by Dennis Jacobsen:

Asserts that the church should be effective agitators. The church was not placed in communities to be nice looking buildings. Nor, is it the purpose of the church to be a Sunday morning hangout spot. We are in our community to sources of agitation.¹⁸ Jacobsen explains that agitation mean getting other to act out of their own power and self-interest, out of their own vision for their life. When the church agitates its community in a healthy manner it causes people to fight for a better life for themselves. It

¹⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹⁸ Dennis A. Jacobsen, *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 66-69.

causes people to revolt against living below what they have the ability to rise above. Healthy agitation was the corner stone of the Civil Rights movement.

In order to agitate the community, the church must have a relationship with its community. We have no right to agitate people we do not know. The church should learn what their community's self-interests are, who they are, and what their potential is.¹⁹ If this important step is not done, we risk becoming 'outside agitators.' The church risk becoming an entity that imposes on others what it thinks they need, not what they know they need.

Know your community. This helps to create an ability to preach prophetically to a community. Jesus could be prophetic because he spoke to a community he knew intimately. Jesus knew the struggles of the people. He knew the plight of his people. He was an agitator against the norm that his people had become accustom to. Great prophets of the distance past and recent past have all an ability to be create healthy agitation through prophetic preaching.

The Heart of Black Preaching by Cleophus J. LaRue: He instructs that black preaching is an experiential brooding that occurs in the embryonic stage prior to the act of exegesis. He believes that there is a symbiotic connection between scripture and the African-American experience.²⁰ African-Americans see their lives in the scripture. They relate with the oppressed. As a result they internalize the liberation motif of the Gospel. It becomes a living and viable answer to their daily experiences. Scripture impacts life and life impacts scripture.

¹⁹ Ibid., 66.

²⁰ Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 13.

LaRue examines the prophetic work of the post-Civil War African-American preacher. He notes that during that era of national unrest and upheaval, black preachers found a way to preach in a very meaningful way. Four observations are made about the prophetic preachers of that time.²¹ First, they had varying educational experiences. To compensate for educational shortcomings, preachers kept abreast with the current issues and news. This allowed them to speak to the circumstances that effected their congregants. Secondly, African-American preachers of that time were deliberate about applying the Gospel in significant ways. This meant that the black preacher showed his people, who were dealing with the violence of a post-Civil War south, how Jesus spoke directly to their plight. Thirdly, LaRue found that during this time, black preachers sought to find a balance between having a pastoral and prophetic voice. Preachers had to encourage parishioners to maintain a Godly and moral life. Pastorally a message of ethical soberness needed to be preached. However, the black preacher could not abandon having a prophetic voice. This voice addressed the broader interest of the black masses. The prophetic voice of the preacher called out for social justice and corporate issues. Lastly, each black preacher of this era had a deeply rooted faith in the power of God. They believed that God had the power to bring about a change no other power could do. These four tenants of the post- Civil War black preacher gave birth to a powerful voice. A prophetic voice birthed out of oppression and a constant daily struggle. Fighting for survival planted the seeds that grew into the creativity of the black mind and insightfulness of black preaching.

The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching by Kenyatta R. Gilbert: Gives an insightful definition for what it means to have a prophetic voice. It is explained

²¹ Ibid., 67.

that the prophetic voice is a mediating voice of God's activity to transform church and society in a present-future sense based on the principle of justice. The basic biblical construct of the prophetic voice is to speak in opposition to oppression, self-serving ideologies, idolatry, and self-deceiving mentalities.²² A prophetic voice strongly speaks out against, but it also speaks up for. Prophetic voices speak up for the socially overlooked, overwhelmed, and the culturally undervalued. The prophetic preacher gives a voice to those who need to be heard in the public square. Prophetic voices do not speak because they can, they speak because they must. The prophetic voice often finds itself speaking in direct opposition to established power. Gilbert also asserts that the prophetic voice is a voice of relentless hope. As bleak as outcomes have seemed at times, the African-American preacher has been undaunted in his cries of, "There's a better day coming!"

Gilberts also reports that the common thread of all prophetic preaching is the recognition of injustice. The prophetic preacher must do two things. The preacher must name the injustice. Then the preacher must say what justice should be. This causes the injustice to be worked out in the openness of the community instead of it taking place in isolation.²³

The black prophetic voice was forged in the fires of the antebellum south. Our communities have journeyed far from those hate driven and oppressive days. Yet, the need for the prophetic voice has not died. *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander: Deals with the concept of legalized discrimination. Our nations has celebrated the end of

²² Kenyatta R. Gilbert, *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 12.

²³ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

discrimination in employment, housing public benefits, and public accommodations. However, Alexander states that the confinements of Jim Crow still exist. They have unfortunately gotten more sophisticated. She notes that labeling a young black man who has committed a crime, a 'felon,' is subjecting him to a lifetime of subjugation. This is all done within the constructs of our legal system.²⁴ You may simply say, "Just don't commit any crimes and you don't have to worry about this." The reality is that too many young black men grow up in environments that are conducive to criminal activity. Unfortunately by the time many black young men reach the age of twenty-one, they have already been involved in the court system.²⁵ Being a felon makes it legal to discriminate against a person's employment, housing public benefits, and public accommodations. As long as there are people becoming victims of an oppressive system, the prophetic preacher must speak.

James Cone is a man who has made a mark on the theological world. His spiritual insights have helped shape many of the prevalent black theologies of today. In his essay on *Black Theology in American Religion*, James Cone speaks of the "warring ideals" that have divided African identity and American identity.²⁶ These same warring ideals continue today for black theologians in the debate between African and Christian identities. For Cone, black theology is distinctly Christian, but contextualized in black American experience with its roots in African culture.

²⁴ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 191-192.

²⁵ Ibid., 192.

²⁶ James Cone, *Black Theology* (Boston: Orbis Books, 1994), 74.

This same kind of dilemma could be posed in the context of any number of alternative theological perspectives arising today among Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians. And this also applies for indigenous and liberation theologies being developed in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, those worlds that were Christianized primarily as a result of European colonialism. For each, there is a question how to re-contextualize Christianity in an alternative community, especially a community marginalized and oppressed by those very people who brought the Gospel, and also a community with distinct and different cultural traditions from those of Western European Christians.

The re-contextualization of theology arises in a somewhat different way for women. Unlike subordinated races who have preserved some remnants of an alternative culture from a period prior to their enslavement, the subordination of women takes place at the heart of every culture and thus deprives women of an alternative culture with which to express their identity over against the patriarchal culture of family and society. Some cultures give women distinct religious rituals and cults and quasi-autonomous social and economic groupings, providing some basis for a women's culture or "sub-culture." But even these female groupings remain largely invisible to the public culture, defined as male.²⁷

Cone stated that when he was growing up, whites wanted blacks to believe that God created blacks to be white people's servants. Cone rebelled against this twisted ideology. At the age of sixteen, James began preaching and starting pastoring that following year in 1954. He would see whites treat blacks like they were dirt and then watch those same whites go to church and it bothered him deeply. He admitted that he

²⁷ Ibid., 85.

would make plans to interrupt white worship services on Sunday morning, but would never go through with it. Almost sixty years after this interesting childhood Cone commented in an interview commonly known as, *That's Why They Crucified Him*, "I don't wish to know what whites think about Jesus, I wish to hear what they think about blacks." Cone had seen whites go to church in the morning, lynch a black in the afternoon, and then return to church later that very same evening. Cone believed that what someone had to say about Jesus was often secondary. People hate and attach Jesus' name to it. He wanted to hear not what one feels about Jesus, but rather how do you feel about me, your neighbor. 1st John 4:20 says, "Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen."²⁸ This is one of the verses Cone used to strengthen his argument against the irony of a Christian racist.

Too many trees have bared strange fruit by those who did acted in the name of THEIR Jesus. Lives have been taken and others inevitably destroyed while those who did the persecution and decimating held a Christian flag tightly in hand for THEIR Jesus. Whites have sung shall we gather at the river, a Christian song, but later return to that same river for a Klan meeting.²⁹

It was Malcolm X that first made Cone question his religion. Malcolm stated that Christianity was a white man's religion. This was so confronting to Cone because this was what he had been wrestling and struggling with, but up to that point was unable to adequately say. Malcolm X went on to further say, "Blacks should adopt an understanding of God from our own history and experience. We should stop belief in a

²⁸ NRSV

²⁹ James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*. (Boston: Orbis Books, 1971), 32.

blond haired, blue eyed Jesus that gives delayed rewards.” The idea of delayed rewards was thought to be a Martin L. King focus. As previously mentioned Cone had a strong admiration for the work of Rev. King. Now with the statements of Malcolm clashing with those of Martin his theological world was caving in around him. Martin and Malcolm shared a common goal for a common people but had very different ways by which to reach that goal.³⁰ Cone was in a dilemma of theological proportions. He stood at a theological cross road and his turning here would shape the rest of his Life.

When asked about how the two men’s theories and philosophies intersect Cone wrote, “I think Malcolm X and Martin King both had the same goal: freedom for African Americans. Malcolm X said on one occasion, “Dr. King and I want the same thing, namely freedom.” Only Dr. King thought that integration would get us freedom; Malcolm said separation would get us freedom. King thought you could not get freedom as an American by destroying or declaring your intentions to separate from America, and we would get freedom primarily by emphasizing our American identity. Malcolm, however, thought we would get freedom by emphasizing our African identity and origin: You must know where you came from before you can know who you are right now and who you want to be in the future.”³¹ Cone concluded that you need both emphases, because we are African American. It is important to know that the African comes first. Malcolm X’s point is crucial: without knowledge of one’s past, before we came to America, we will not know how to be African American. We will end up being “American Africans,” and that is a silly thing to be.” In the end Cone learned from both men’s prophetic voice. He

³⁰ Cone, James. *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Boston: Orbis Books, 1992), 114.

³¹ Ibid., 119.

kept Martin's nonviolent emphasis, but gleaned Malcolm's assertion that blacks need a more personal God.

Accordingly, the first book that Cone wrote was *God of the Oppressed* and he articulated in an unprecedented manner the notion of a Black Jesus.³² Though Cone wrote that book in 1971, its prophetic affects can still be heard presently in the mouths of black youths who struggle with the image of a white Jesus. The Outlawz had a Billboard hit in 1999 entitled 'Black Jesus.' In it they said, "We need someone to go to that hurts like we hurt; and understands our struggle and pain. So we pray to Black Jesus." This was just 2 years after Cone had revised his book *God of the Oppressed*. A member of The Outlawz accredited Cone's book for giving him the idea for the song. Cone's work continues to solicit the attention of current generations. Rap has embraced a narrative that reaches many communities with its anger and its passion. Rap rebels against certain societal norms in ways that are similar to a prophet railing against injustice.

The researcher also consulted Cone's *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology*. This book concerns itself with languages about God. Christian theology is a language about God's liberating activity in the world on behalf of the freedom of the oppressed. Christian theology must begin with Scripture and with Christ. Christian theology is language about the crucified and risen Christ who grants freedom to all who are falsely condemned in an oppressive society. Such as the one he grew up in. By using Scripture, we are forced by Scripture itself to focus on our social existence, but not merely in terms of our own interest. In an attempt to do theology in the light of this crucified and risen Christ, Cone speaks of Christian theology as black theology because

³² Cone, *Oppressed* 121.

theology derived from the moans and shouts of oppressed black people defines a different set of problems than those found in the white the white theological textbooks.³³ The style of black worship is a constituent of its content, and both elements point of the theme of liberation. Black religion is by definition the opposite of white religion because the former was born in the black people's political struggle to liberate themselves from oppression in the white church and the society it justifies. The researcher did not focus on Cone's concepts of liberation to create a tone of divisiveness amongst readers. The crux of the research hinges on one's ability to self identify. Cone's life work speaks specifically to that point. One cannot be prophetic if they don't first know who they are.

Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers and Adults by Patricia Cranton: She addresses the importance for perpetual development through a healthy learning environment. This aided the researcher in finding a way to approach his context as an objective model for study.

Cranton's introduces the idea of being a transformative educator. She gives strategies to reach this goal. Expectations are listed as well. The reader is informed that educators are expected to maintain an updated expertise in their field, implement innovation, and contribute to their profession.³⁴ This job must be achieved by given the educator freedom to access their given space and needs. Without this freedom they are not educators, they are simply reciters. Not only will the educator suffer from this lack of emancipation, but the learner will too.

³³ James Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Boston: Orbis Books, 1999), 52.

³⁴ Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 50-52.

The term emancipated refers to an educator's independence to chart one's own curriculum. If an educator is emancipated they must be willing to accept the responsibility of being a self-manager.³⁵ Development will not be in the hands of others. This means that if there is failure, one cannot blame it on others. Self-managers must be able to recognize strengths and weaknesses within themselves. So they can see where growth and development is needed most. The connection between an emancipated educator and self-management is that the unfettered educator continues to learn because they recognize areas in themselves that still require improvements. In a teaching-team multi-site church model, it is healthy for its leaders to know if they are a self-manager or an emancipated educator.

Learner control is an organizational mode than can be describe by two paradigm shifts. The first organizational structure is teacher controlled. In this mode the educator functions as expert and employs techniques such as demonstrations and lectures. This mode does not foster conversation. The second organizational structure is learner controlled. In this mode the educator functions as a facilitator and resource outlet.³⁶ The instructor is still in control of the learning environment, but allows students to interact and speak more. The hope is that teaching occurs from the total body, not just from the teacher. Each of these methods can be effective, but they must be goal driven by the educator.

In chapter four, Cranton informs readers that critical reflection is imperative to the process of transformational learning. When this type of reflection is correctly exercised it

³⁵ Ibid., 61-62.

³⁶ Ibid., 66-69.

causes one to reflect on themselves, their history, knowledge, and social roles.³⁷ Some of these areas may be functioning in a healthy manner and require no change. However, as time passes there will be needs for revisions, perspective changes, and revamped considerations. Clothes can become outdated, but an educator should make sure than their way of thinking never does. Making sure critical reflection is employed in your life helps to ensure your development process does not become stagnant. It keeps a person searching for new areas to grow in knowledge and understanding.

One would not simply reflect in an effort to live in the past. Reflection can also be used to help with problem solving. This is possible when reflecting aids in distinguishing between things that are based in belief and those that are based in fact.³⁸ Distinguishing from belief in this context implies being able to recognize something that is unhealthy or a hindrance. A central part of being able to progress is having an understanding of what your assets and liabilities are. If one cannot recognize these it becomes difficult to develop in a healthy way.

Cranton believes that it is important to articulate ones assumptions. She goes further to explain that the word assumption can be understood to mean, “taken for granted.”³⁹ Most of the assumptions that people make happen with them being unaware of it. People function with a certain level of assumptions in their daily life. Without critical reflection exercises to help them identify the existence of prominent assumptions in their life; assumption making can form into a habit that impedes learning. One’s

³⁷ Ibid., 75.

³⁸ Ibid., 77.

³⁹ Ibid., 82-83.

community, family, and education inform one's experiences. Those experiences shape assumptions. When educators rely on assumptions they abandon answers and reason for preconceived scenarios. Facing new challenges with an open mind allows you to fully learn from that situation.

Critical reflection should lead one to imagining alternatives.⁴⁰ When assumptions are made, it often comes at the cost of exploring other methods or avenues of thought. What are my options? That question can lead to new opportunities for learning, even from familiar situations. When alternatives are acknowledge it frees both student and teacher that areas assumptions would have alienated them from. When there are options there is little room for learning.

Chapter five shifted to focus on Becoming a Transformative Learner. It is expressed to the reader that few things in life can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." The answers to most questions come in unique form and are saturated with complexities. Cranton says, "Consequently, an awareness of our meaning perspective as educators becomes critical to our development."⁴¹ The perspective of an educator informs the relationship the educator has with the learner. To illustrate, if an educator holds the perspective that an educator's role is parental and caregiver, they may share interrelated beliefs that result in the creation of a classroom where community is emphasized instead of authority. The educator's actions become the evidence of their specific meaning scheme.

⁴⁰ Idid., 90-92.

⁴¹ Ibid., 96.

It is noted that Jack Mezirow felt that one's meaning perspectives could be distorted. However, Cranton feels a more accurate description is "undeveloped." Distorted suggest that the meaning perspective the educator has reached is concluded and flawed. Undeveloped means that the perspective has not concluded. If the person is given more time and perhaps uses greater effort, their meaning perspective can be made full. Distorted is also a matter that one has unknowingly made an assumption which leads to a constrained perception. When we are unaware we have no choice.⁴² Perspectives may not always be clearly right or wrong, but it is important for a perspective to be made consciously and open to critical reflection.

An educator must also be self-directed. There are books and seminars that give tips and tools for teachers to employ in their various working environment.⁴³ Yet, the educator must still do the teaching themselves. Educators must be self-driven. Responsibility for the learners falls squarely at the feet of the educator. In ones classroom it may be necessary to modify the curriculum to fit the needs of your students. This is within the power of the educator. The educator should continually assess their student's development to know which direction to take.

Cranton moves through intricate strategies of development to lucent explanations of transformative learning. If educators are going to be effective, they must also constantly pursue learning. This learning and educating cycle is an effective circle of knowledge that both imparts and takes in new information. Ministry workers have a dual

⁴² Idib., 103-104.

⁴³ Ibid., 109-111.

role of both teacher and student. As ministry leaders learn it becomes our duty to impart new understanding to our fellow sojourners.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORITICAL FOUNDATION

Why has the multi-site church structure become such an increasingly popular format? An examination of multi-site churches shows several factors that make them a very viable choice for accomplishing ministry. Accordingly, the reader will be provided with theological observations as they pertain to multi-site churches. Research and analysis will focus on the validity of the multi-site church construct, the purpose of the multi-site church, and the function of the Holy Spirit in multi-site church.

Theologically Speaking

This theological analysis begins with showing how the multi-site church has a biblical foundation. The journey of the Christian church has been interesting. It has roots in both the formulaic and the unconventional. The Christian church has continually bounced from staunch and rigid ideologies, to daring revolutionary cries, such as Martin Luther *nailing* his ninety-five Theses of Contention to the Wittenberg Church *door*. The church is as alive as the God it glorifies. In such a statement one truth becomes evident. God's kingdom is not stagnate; rather it is ever growing and changing. The question then becomes, "What is the catalyst for a living and transforming church?"

Some opponents of multi-site church structure feel that the church should meet together and not be compartmentalized. Others feel that the multi-site church embodies

Jesus' call of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).¹ Scott McConnell feels that by striving to do ministry in a multi-site construct the Great Commission is carried out by utilizing a culture of multiplication, removing logistical barriers to reach more people, and remaining open to the new possibilities. Jesus implored his disciples to 'go out.' We've set our churches on street corners and beckoned 'come in.'

Jesus gave did not stop with the Great Commission. He also gave the Great Commandment of Matthew 22:37-40.² Jesus implored us to love one another. We are also challenged to take the love of Christ to all people. This means that the church must meet people where they are. This is a fundamental goal of a moving church. A church that is active goes out to give love instead of hoping someone comes in to be loved on.

Multi-site churches give credence to a 'flesh and blood' theology. This is the belief that you can't help people change unless you can touch them.³ Please don't misunderstand. This does not imply that multi-site members have a healing touch. 'Flesh and blood' theology means that it is more effective to be in a community as an agent of change, than it is to send gift boxes and wish people the best from afar. Being in a community allows a ministry to be hands-on. They get to know the community and the community gets to know them.

Other arguments against multi-site churches are further illustrated Gregg Allison. Allison recounts a theological debate between several of his colleagues at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A portion of his colleagues believed that multi-site churches were not biblically supported because their existence ignored the call for

¹ McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches*, 5-13.

² Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Roadtrip*, 201.

³ Ibid., 200.

ekklēsia.⁴ The New Testament Greek use of *ekklēsia* is commonly translated to mean assembly. Opponents purport that it is the intention of Christ to create the church as an assembly of believers. They further state that it becomes counter-productive to that mission of establishing *ekklēsia* if we actively divide Christian assemblies. They believe that the church must assemble together to effectively fulfill the definition of *ekklēsia*. Dividing congregations when there is opportunity to bring them together ignores our responsibility to assemble.

However, Allison recounts a very effective counter argument to this understanding of *ekklēsia*. *He warns that it is dangerous to attempt to define a concept by defining a word. The definition of thirst is a sensation of dryness in the mouth and throat related to the need or desire to drink.*⁵ So, one could conclude that as long as an individual remains hydrated they have successfully quenched any thirst in their life. This would be using the definition of a word to describe its concept. However, *the concept of thirst is much more complex. Thirst as a concept has as much relevance to a person's inner drive to accomplish a goal, as it does with a need to consume libation.* The reader can clearly see the inherent flaw of the 'definition as a concept' method. *Ekklēsia has much deeper meaning than assembling. Ekklēsia means church as well as assembly.*⁶

Jesus tells his disciple Simon in Matthew 16:18, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail

⁴ Gregg Allison, *Resurgence: A Ministry of Mars Hill*. May 18, 2011. <http://theresurgence.com/2011/05/18/are-multi-site-churches-biblical> (accessed October 16, 2012)

⁵ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 1810.

⁶ N. Clayton Croy, *A Primer of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 12-13.

against it.”⁷ *Christ is not referring to the church as a building.*⁸ *The meaning of ἐκκλησίαν in verse eighteen is rooted in the concept of a collective theological understanding of who Christ is. That collective understanding between individuals creates church. The multi-site movement must function under a healthy biblical understanding of ecclesiology. Are we assembling effectively, or are we effectively being the church?*

This moves the discussion to an important shift in focus. What is the purpose of the multi-site church? To successfully answer this question, one must first understand the purpose of the church at large. Is the church merely a social club where people can come to exercise their prejudices and rules of hierarchy? The Christian church is unique in its ability to transform an ordinary gathering place with common people into a special place with unique worshippers. Charles Journet commented, “The Church appears to us a reality at the same time mysterious and visible. She is mysterious by the life that animates her and is totally divine.”⁹ The church is very real and visceral. We can see it, touch it, and taste the delicious foods that come out of its fellowship hall. Yet, it remains rooted in God who does not meet those same sensory requirements. The church is an earth bound structure, but it is firmly founded in celestial inclinations.

The Bible gives a great illustration of the relationship between earthly and heavenly connectivity in John 15:1-4. There it states, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that

⁷ NRSV

⁸ Michael Coogan, Marc Brettler, and Carol A. Newsom, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), 24-25NT.

⁹ Charles Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 8.

bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.”¹⁰ That portion of scripture shows the essence of the mysterious union between Christ and Church: the vine is the same nature as the branches; it continuously communicates to them its life of truth and love.¹¹ The church is unique only because of who the church connects itself to. If the church was to disassociate itself with God it would lose that necessary connection. In doing so, it would also lose what makes it special.

Johannine theology can also be employed to relativize the relationship believers have with their community.¹² A healthy perspective of the church displays disciples who are active in their community. Disciples were flawed, but followed. Through following Jesus they helped effect communities in a positive way. John 6:5-11 says, “When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in

¹⁰ John 15:1-4 (NRSV).

¹¹ Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, 35.

¹² John Fuellenbach, *Church: The Community for the Kingdom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 114-119.

all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.”¹³

That parcel of scripture illustrates the plight of ordinary people attempting to follow an extra-ordinary savior. Through the direction of Jesus his disciples orchestrated an effort that helped feed thousands of people. Jesus would not be pleased with the community starving. Therefore his disciples could not be at ease with people starving. Christians strive to do better because of who they follow. As a result, they attempt to make themselves and their environment better. The church affects their community and the needs of the community affect the disciples.

The church is alive. It is animated by the Holy Spirit, thus bringing it to life. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit consecrated the church and made it her own.¹⁴ The vibrancy of the church comes from the inward dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The church is the property of the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Spirit fills the church it also unites the church.¹⁵ The effective church does not feed derision or enforce division. Congregants without glaring similarities find a common need in the Holy Spirit. This results in an ability to overcome differences due to a shared desire for God. Where the Holy Spirit dwells there must be unity. If there is no unity there can be no sincere worship. Where there is no worship, God cannot be glorified. When this break down happens the church ceases to function in its community effectively.

¹³ John 6:5-11 (NRSV).

¹⁴ Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, 69-70.

¹⁵ Ibid., 73.

The church itself has a soul. This is a new concept for many. Like our souls it is unseen but in a state of constant fluctuation. It grows and can also be can be harmed.¹⁶ Many Christian churches have started but failed. If a church is not given the opportunity to grow with its surrounding it will eventually be choked. On your way to church on Sundays you may pass an empty building that once attempted to house a church. The church failed and ultimately the soul of the church died. Just as we pass from this earth and leave behind a shell. So sits many abandoned church buildings. Merely shells of a church soul that once was, but passed away.

The body of the church needs to be organic. If it is forced it becomes unnatural and a monstrosity of what it should have been.¹⁷ If a church is true to God it will also be true to its community. Effective Christian churches are not partitioned away from the world its congregants live in. It does not have to force false ideas of utopia when its members live in real situations of societal discontent. A church does not force an untrue message. It speaks to what is real. The Holy Spirit that dwells in the church also dwells in the people. There should not be a disconnection between what the Spirit ministers to and what the people are in need of. The church does not ignore the world congregants live in; rather it speaks directly to that world, its hardships, and injustices.

What gives the church its power? People go to church to experience something sincere and different from what they can find elsewhere.¹⁸ The world is cruel, over sexualized, and predatorily goaled. Immoralities are met with reward and humility is

¹⁶ Ibid., 168-170.

¹⁷ Ibid., 250-261.

¹⁸ John Fuellenbach, *Church: The Community for the Kingdom*, 101-102.

often viewed as weakness. A sex tape brings instant fame, but prayer in school brings instant scrutiny. It is no longer taboo to openly discuss salacious deeds, but it is socially unacceptable to mention Jesus as the true meaning of Christmas. These are examples of what many people find as a daily norm. Thusly, church becomes a haven and refuge from a cold and callus world.

The role of the church as a place of refuge contributes to the sensationalism of church troubles in the news. The expectation is that trouble freely roams everywhere, but the church is supposed to stand as a bastion of strength against such things. When the place that was designed to be a refuge from mess becomes inundated with troubles it ceases to serve its purpose. This can result in two things. Firstly, it can cause believers to lose faith. Secondly, it can give opponents of God ammunition to ridicule the church.

Julio de Santa Ana¹⁹ stated the Jews of New Testament operated under the guise of freedom, but were actually slaves. They were held captive by their contemporary culture, laws, and customs. It had control over them and constantly surrounded them. The systematic dismantling of God's people was so entrenched that even the temple was used as a market place (John 2:16).²⁰ This makes an important addition to our discussion. It shows the negativity of the world can affect places of worship, thereby controlling us. The church must be careful that it does not allow its community to shape them so effectively that the negativity of the community hinders the productivity of the church.

¹⁹ Julio de Santa Ana is a liberation theologian from Uruguay.

²⁰ William R. Barr, *Constructive Christian Theology in the Worldwide Church*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 432.

“Our understanding of God has been distorted and at times blinded by sin.”²¹ Sin has not only infected our moral compass, but it has also damaged humankind’s entire being, including one’s ability to understand. The image of God in man has become totally marred. The Spirit must act as an agent of restoration. A hospital does not improve its patients by improving its building. A church’s foundation is God. A church’s measure of effectiveness is in its ability to aid congregants in their spiritual healing process.

Math and science are predicated on finding specific methods in order to duplicate certain results. This means that math and science are only as strong as the formulas they follow. Worship should not be confined to a rigid formula because the Holy Spirit that guides worship is not formulaic. Churches generally have a certain methodology to worship and praise. Many churches will begin with a call to worship and end with a benediction. This is the common formula. However, what happens in between those things may vary wildly. Those varying worship structures are part of a building block that makes each church unique in its own way. Fuellenbach notes that the most important ecclesiological formula for ministry is understanding that there is no one formula that works everywhere.²² In order to follow the Holy Spirit, one must be free to change according to a particular community's needs. That means that though all churches need the Holy Spirit in order to function, the means of connecting to that divine entity are usually unique to each body of believers. So, each church site needs connection with God, but may find its own unique way to achieve sincere connectivity.

²¹ John Macquarrie, *Theology: Church and Ministry*, (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 53-54.

²² Fuellenbach, *Church: The Community for the Kingdom*, 68.

Fullenbach also understands that not all churches operate autonomously. Some churches are part of a larger denominational structure. This may result in certain prescribed doctrines of worship being present at all of their parishes. With this type of church structure Fullenbach suggest that the relationship between the whole church and the individual church be reciprocal and mutual.²³ This would allow the individual church the ability to follow the Holy Spirit's direction for their specific congregation; while simultaneously remaining true to their denominational ties. So, each church site needs connection with God, but may find its own unique way to achieve sincere connectivity.

God's church is important in God's kingdom. So, is it possible to separate the church from the kingdom of God? The distinction between church and the kingdom of God has deep theological ramifications. If the church does not make the kingdom, but is an entity helping to comprise the kingdom, it allows for broader inclusion. Meaning, even if an individual is not in the church, they are still in God's kingdom (world). The church has a responsibility to the world to inspire justice and liberation. This is not a church mandate, but a kingdom decree.²⁴ The church cannot change its reality without changing the reality of the world.

The purpose of the church is positively influence the interrelationship between God and his people. The multi-site church model carries out this purpose by remaining in symbiotic connection with God, with each church site, and their respective communities. This creates harmony between all involved entities and necessitates that God remains the shared theological center.

²³ Ibid., 68.

²⁴ Ibid., 82-83.

Our discussion of Ecclesiology has shown the purpose of the church. Next the researcher will focus on Pneumatology. This will illuminate how the church functions. An effective ministry cannot operate as a facsimile of another ministry. One size fits all may work when it's applied to hats, but it is much less effective when doing ministry. To this point, the Holy Spirit acts as an identifier.

Mystical theologies of the Eastern Orthodox tradition view the Spirit as a 'point of contact.' It is through experiencing the Holy Spirit that the revelation of Jesus and peace of God comes.²⁵ This "point of contact" is not the fulfillment of peace, but it is the start of its journey. It is the point of self realization, which is an inward revelation. It is also a start of divine realization, which is an upward revelation. The Holy Spirit according to this understanding does not bring spiritual fruits as gifts. This would mean that all believers had to do was wait with their hands outstretched in receiving position. Rather the Spirit acts as a map provider. Understanding that salvation and peace are not delivered to those that sit and wait, but to those to get busy and work.

This is a Pauline understanding of the Spirit. Philippians 2:12 reads "Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" Believers should respond to the presence of the Spirit by persevering towards the kingdom.²⁶ The Spirit is not a celestial vehicle for handouts. The Spirit acts as a motivator and guider.

The concept of Pneumatology orientation expresses the dynamic role the Spirit plays in salvation. When one experiences salvation, the Holy Spirit fills an individual. In

²⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: the Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 67-69.

²⁶ Coogan, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, 281NT.

this act, a being that is unstable by nature receives a Spirit that has unchanging grace. It is described as the experience of theosis (deification).²⁷ Many people come to church with a need to be filled, but that does not mean they are not already full. The Spirit is a movement of life. So the question becomes, “How do I participate in this movement?”²⁸ In order to be in the Spirit one only needs to make them self available. The Spirit has no respect of person. Nor does it become a factor how much wealth or stature one has. Churches are flooded with people who have been filled with things that are contrary to a healthy Christian lifestyle. The Holy Spirit must first empty before it can fill. An emptied person is a readied vessel.

One’s life does not truly start until the Spirit enters it.²⁹ This news is a stark contrast to common perception of church by secular culture. Often the church is painted by the unconverted as a good times ender. Following Christ is viewed through the lenses of undertaking a cumbersome journey that only has an eschatological reward. In this regard the church has failed effectively relate its message. The church has struggled to show Christ as liberator. Some churches have become so staunch and rigid that it becomes implausible for them to be the beacon of an unencumbered life. How can I assert freedom when my structure exudes stringent order? In this regard, the church must allow the Spirit to guide them more than their bylaws. This will also result in worship becoming a freeing experience. Consider it ordered by the reason, but spontaneous by the Spirit. This can create a Spirit focused freedom.

²⁷ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 69.

²⁸ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, (London: Fortress Press, 1997), 22-24.

²⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 89-92.

The Spirit transcends the world but is also the immanent force of the world.³⁰ An effective church recognizes that the people it attempts to serve have lives that exist outside of its walls. One can effectively minister to a person when ministerial focus extends to the needs of that person's community. Some of the issues that people wrestle with are systemic of community woes. Just as the Holy Spirit is a force in the church, the Spirit is also a force in community. Therefore, the church is empowered to change lives by effecting community. The church should not close its doors to its community. It should leave the confines of its hallowed walls to inject itself as a levee against the rolling tide of injustice. Multi-site churches can effectively achieve this community oriented goal because by proximity they are in more communities.

However, not all churches professing God seek to change their communities in loving ways. It can be argued that though they are churches in structure, they are not in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Organizations stemmed in hatred or resentment cannot be rooted in God. History shows that humankind has an ability to create religious structures that are founded on hate instead of love. The Ku Klux Klan fits this mold well. It is an origination that has spiritual roots, but hate filled practices. How is it possible to create a church that prays to a loving God while simultaneous spewing the venom hate? We must examine the nature of the world in which we do ministry. The war-torn nature of the world eventually begins to reflect on our nature to love.³¹ God created us in love and we must love in order to carry out his will. As elementary as it sounds, sometimes the

³⁰ Ibid., 121

³¹ Gregory Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 50-52.

first lesson the church has to instill in its congregants is how to love. (The lesson of love comes threefold. First, one learns how to love God. Secondly, one learns how to love oneself. Thirdly, one must learn to love their community.) It is therefore possible to be in church and not in God's will if your actions are not motivated by God's love. A church is more than a collection of people who call on God. It is an assembly of people that are dedicated to being motivated by the love of God. Subsequently, those people become a 'coalition of the willing.' Following God's love and being in God's will. This eliminates the ability for hate to motivate us; and allows the Holy Spirit the room to saturate our hearts in Godly love.

When God made humans free, the risk that one will freely do evil is as intrinsic a possibility as the chance that one might freely do good.³² The Holy Spirit does not erase your will. It will however guide you to act toward God's will. The Holy Spirit does not come upon us to brain wash; it comes upon us to heart wash. People who struggle with alcoholism can go to a group called Alcoholics Anonymous. There they are given twelve steps to recovery. Step one, admit you have a problem. Step two, acknowledge there is a higher power; and that through reliance on the higher power one can find help. It is a healthy practice to acknowledge there are some problematic areas in your life. After doing so, finding aid in a higher power is essential. Your obstacle may not be alcohol, but surrendering your will to accept God's will works to buffet a multitude of sin.

Identity is important. Individuals who have not achieved a positive self-image will ultimately comprise a congregation without a healthy identity. God unites humankind, a

³² Stephen Davis, ed. *Encountering Evil, A New Edition: Live Options in Theodicy*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 75.

horizontal connection, through identifying God with a vertical connection.³³ Healthy relationships are fostered through a connection with God. If you have identified God, you can now identify one's true self. Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image..."³⁴ It is God's design that humanity reflects God's sovereign divinity.³⁵ This does not imply that we are suppose to be the physical embodiment of God. It means humanity has the unique ability to have a relationship with God that causes the love of God to become a present reality. Therefore, to know God is to truly know oneself. A congregation comprised of those who are in relationship with Christ will ultimately invoke a unique congregational identity. This type of congregation actively creates a heavenly image instead of attempting to duplicate the image of other congregational bodies. Multi-site churches should share similar traits, but ultimately reflect the image of God. There can be a divinity in man because there is already humanity in God.³⁶ This is the ontological property of God. God proceeds us, and is congruently working through us.

When personality was first applied to God it was viewed as heresy. It was called the 'Heresy of Unitarianism.' It stemmed from the belief that acknowledging a personality of God came at the expense of separating God from the Trinity.³⁷ It took biblical scholars time to understand the uniqueness of God did not harm the Trinity, instead it strengthened it. This is a lesson for application for believers. People are

³³ John McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 184.

³⁴ NRSV

³⁵ Coogan, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, 3OT.

³⁶ Macquarrie, *Theology: Church and Ministry*, 60.

³⁷ McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology*, 194.

supposed to be unique. Congregations are supposed to be unique. We are solidified through our love of Christ. We are unique in our relationship with Christ.

What does divinely inspired uniqueness look like? The manifestation of the Holy Spirit is seen in how God involves himself in human volition, thought, feeling, and action. It is God's Spirit becoming involved with our Spirit.³⁸ The Holy Spirit does not function to give a unique physical appearance. The Holy Spirit shapes lifestyle. Following Christ is not an appearance, it is a lifestyle. Worship is not about finding a unique appearance. It is about changing lifestyle. Accordingly, a conversation concerning uniqueness among multi-site churches is not concerned with the physical appearance of those congregations. It is focused on allowing the Holy Spirit to function as the catalyst of lifestyle change.

The mission of the Spirit works in direct correlation with the mission of the Son. The actions of Jesus are done by the power of the Spirit dwelling within him. The actions of the Spirit are created through the loving connection between Father and Son.³⁹ This is the circular economy of the Church. To be in this system is to experience the power, creation, and love of the Trinity.

Balance founded in Pneumatology shows that diversity in the church is a reflection of the many gifts that God has given. It further illustrates the Spirit's ability to orchestrate harmony out of similarity is absent.⁴⁰ Every difference that someone brings to a congregation is another gift that can be added to the body of Christ. If everyone was the

³⁸ Ibid., 176-179.

³⁹ Ibid., 159-160.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 166.

same it would leave a congregation overloaded in certain talents and severely lacking in others. Difference adds distinction. A person who embraces the differences of others, is a person who appreciates the empowerment found in collective diversity. A congregation that embraces differences of others, is a congregation that appreciates the unique gifts of others.

The Spirit can itself become a differentiating force. Understanding that what is needed in one Christian community may not be needed in all.⁴¹ We all need God, but may need him in varying ways. The encounters we have with God shape our perspective of God. The African-American community often perceives the Holy Spirit through the lenses of liberator. This is because the African-American community has deep roots in struggling to overcome an oppressive society. That is in contrast with the Anglo community who generally discern the Holy Spirit as the provider of the fruits of the Spirit. Bringing varying understanding of the God does not weaken his presence. Instead it strengthens it through the act of converging understandings.

Geoffrey Wainwright believes the nature of the church is best described in the perspective of the “Body of Christ.”⁴² This analogy can go deeper. The body of Christ was perfect, yet to be fully used it had to become broken. It took a broken savior to redeem humankind. Perhaps then it takes an imperfect church to reach an imperfect people. Perfect ministries will undoubtedly resonate with perfect people. To this point, congregations who are willing to admit to imperfection can more effectively reach out to those in their community.

⁴¹ Ibid., 169.

⁴² Geoffrey Wainwright, *Embracing Purpose: Essays on God, the World and the Church*, (Great Britain: Epworth, 2007), 208.

Pope John Paul II stated the Holy Spirit brings a “culture of life” into this modern “culture of death.” In a society of bad news the Holy Spirit has the ability to change the narrative.⁴³ This does not require the Holy Spirit to change what people see. It speaks the Spirit’s ability to shift how people translate what they see. Think of the Spirit as prescription glasses. Once supplied with it you can see the world with greater clarity and perspective.

In Galatians 5: 19-22, Paul list things of this world and things of the Spirit. Moltmann shows the contrast between the list is that one is the ‘work of the flesh’ while the other is the fruit of the Spirit. One cannot make fruit. Fruit must be grown.⁴⁴ Things of the Spirit do not come from our work. If this was the case we would circumvent the Spirit and take matters into our own hands. However, fruit comes from the growth of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be manipulated. It functions to empower those who are willing to be used.

Multi-site churches must maintain a shared theological understanding. This simply means they all profess and believe in the same God. The teachings in all congregations should be reflective of a common understanding of the divinity of God. All church sites should also share the same missiology. This mission can be simply to win souls to Christ. Methodology is the area where multi-site churches can vary the most. How the congregation embodies the Holy Spirit should be unique. The manner in which a congregation interacts with their community should be adaptable to each respective community.

⁴³ Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 18.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 52-53.

The Bible is filled with archetypes that help shape the current landscape of today's multi-site churches. In Luke 15, Jesus gives a parable of leaving many to find one lost sheep. In that same chapter Jesus tells the parable of a woman who sought out her lost coin. The church must be intentional about seeking the lost. The gospels give us the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40). Each call for a church that will go into communities and actively bring love to people. This illustrates the biblical foundation of the multi-site church movement to go into more communities.

In the gap between ecclesiological principle and ecclesiological practice where is your church?⁴⁵ There is much more to a congregation's makeup than geographical location and financial abilities. What a person believes does not always show in one's actions. Desire and belief often make up the intersecting roads at which many live. Although the church is active in its community, it stands as a refuge from societal woes. The church works to positively influence the interrelationship between God and his people. This is the purpose of multi-site churches.

A ministry attempting to be a carbon copy of another church ultimately produces a counterfeit version of that church. A congregation must be allowed to follow the Pneumatological direction taking place in their midst. The function of the Holy Spirit is not to duplicate. The function of the Holy is to inspire. Accordingly, multi-site churches do not need to duplicate each other. They simply need to allow the Holy Spirit to empower identity. This results in the true muse for congregational development being embodied in divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit acts to empower, motivate, build, and

⁴⁵ Wainwright, *Embracing Purpose*, 211-214.

reveal. Thus giving the church its identity. That is the function of the Holy Spirit in multi-site churches.

This Is Where It Started

The bible is the foundation for all true ecclesiological movements. This holds true when discussing the evolution of the multi-site church. In the eighteenth chapter of Exodus there is a detailed account of how the framework for the multi-site church came into existence. It is here that the reader can ascertain the framework and function of the earliest multi-site church movement.

This template of the earliest multi-site church movement that is traditionally associated with the book of Exodus is believed to be penned by Moses.⁴⁶ The first five books of the bible are known as the Pentateuch. The strong repetitive writing style and patterns throughout the Pentateuch suggest that they were penned by the same author. Some accredit Moses with authorship. Scholars argue that the use of Egyptians words and the intimate familiarity with Egyptian customs in the history of Joseph synchronize with the experience and education of Moses.⁴⁷ He (Moses) was a Jewish man with an Egyptian education and background. These strong correlations when taken into account, provide substantial evidence that denotes the ease with which one could conclude Moses as author.

Yet, 'biblical source criticism' of the Pentateuch raised several inquiries of author authenticity. One interesting theory was introduced as the Christian world passed through the second naiveté of criticism. Julius Wellhausen, a German scholar introduced four

⁴⁶ Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger III, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Abridged Edition: Old Testament* (Nashville: Zondervan, 2004), 64.

⁴⁷ Frederick Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch: Their Origin, Contents, and Significance* (New York: Methodist Book Concern Press, 1916), 66.

authors called (JEDP). He believed that these four authors wrote the Pentateuch instead of Moses. The (J) stands for the Yawhist writer. The Yawhist is thought to have written around 850 BCE. The Yawhist was followed by the Elohist (E) who was believed to have written in 700 BCE. In Julius' theory (D) is for the Deuteronomist who probably wrote in 623 BCE, and the latter of the four authors were the (P), the Priestly author who wrote in 500-450 BCE.⁴⁸ The early writings of the bible are believed to yield to these four authors and can be supported by the contents that reveal four distinct traditions. In addition, the authors come in groups that have connected various common and exclusive traditions with one another at important times in Israel's history. It is easier for some to conceive four heavenly gifted writers than to give Moses sole credit. Several factors uphold Julius Wellhausen's school of thought. If Moses did in fact write the Pentateuch, the task would have proven time consuming, arduous, and extremely cumbersome. Using primitive writing tools Moses would have had to chisel from stone as he etches out five whole books of the bible. Or, picture him writing as he uses thick ink made from crushed berries and trying to scribe the holy writ on brittle papyrus.⁴⁹ All the while Moses is traveling through the wilderness enroute to the Promised Land. Moses' harsh writing conditions make an appealing case for the existence of four other authors. The collaboration of four authors would have yielded a greater chance to complete such an

⁴⁸ Russel Gregory, *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. ed. Watson E. Mills, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990), 850-852. Pentateuchal studies are influenced like the folklore that arose in an oral tradition where change and interpretation is common.

⁴⁹ Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*. 88. Because of the strenuous conditions for writing, Eiselen believes this further supports the notion of one author. It would have been a hard task for one to try to copy a style or theme when the materials were so harsh. One would write then in their own manner and not be able to keep the books truly continual.

onerous task. Nonetheless, whoever is given credit for authorship, it is further understood that the single writer or the cluster of writers was God inspired in the endeavor.

As the author pens the book of *Exodus* there is a listing of the lineage of Jacob. The previous book, *Genesis* and chapters 12-50 are concerned with the promise of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Accordingly, as *Exodus* begins the author feels it is important to let the reader know that God's promise has not faltered.⁵⁰ This fact becomes increasingly important as the bondage and captivity of Yahweh's people becomes the early focal point of the narrative.

Tyndale feels there are four prevailing motifs that outline the narrative account of the Jewish people in the book of *Exodus*.⁵¹ The first being God's promises are not based on desperation. Secondly, God's hand of authority extends to and includes advisors as well as believers. Thirdly, God confirms those things that have been promised with miracles. Lastly, God believes in order. It is the latter Mosaic motif that gives credence to the establishing of Moses' multi-site church template in *Exodus* eighteen.

Exodus, chapter eighteen introduces us to an important transitional time with God's people. The people of Israel are Moses' congregation. He is their spiritual leader, and God has charged him with the task of guidance and administration. Moses has a daily responsibility to make sure that this congregation of roving people has physical food, emotional stability, and heavenly direction. Moses is their pastor. This collective congregation of nomads has grown in number to more than one million people. With the

⁵⁰ Bruce M. Metzger and Michael David Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 212-213.

⁵¹ David Daniell, ed., *Tyndale's Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 84-85.

growth in population, Moses faces a congregation that is out of control and challenges his ability to minister and to aid their needs.⁵² Simply put, it's not enough of Moses to go around.

In *Exodus* 18:1-5, the author provides a brief recap of Moses' family history. It is here that Moses is reunited with his Midianite family. It is here that Moses, his father-in-law Jethro, and the newly freed Israelites experience the very first of a series of significant family reunions. God's people were divided by the actions of Cain (*Genesis* 4:10-16), by Abraham disinheriting Hagar and Ishmael (*Genesis* 21:8-21), by Abraham sending out Keturah's sons (*Genesis* 25:1-6), and by Abraham bestowing God's blessing on the wrong son which resulted in the conflict between Esau and Jacob (*Genesis* 25-33). The redactors who compiled the book of *Exodus* were eager to have a reunited family of Israelites before the theophany and covenant-making at Sinai.⁵³ The backdrop of the Mosaic theophany is one of interpersonal and familial struggle. The Israelites are not a massive group singing 'Kumbaya' in strong solidarity. The people are a mixture of friends, acquaintances, families, and even foes. So, these varying groups of people have assembled in large numbers to follow Moses. Each group possesses differing backgrounds, separate agendas, and carrying unresolved issues. These unresolved issues contribute greatly to their out of control behavior.

This is the scriptural context for the ensuing conversation between Moses and Jethro, which begins in *Exodus* 18:6. They are camped at the foot of Mount Horeb. Chronologically this geographical position is not occupied by the chosen people until

⁵² Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 142-143.

⁵³ Metzger, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 215.

chapter twenty-four. Yet, the narrative situates it in chapter eighteen. One hypothesis for this early positioning, other than the family reunion suggestion, is that the author wanted to show the importance God places on Israel being cared for through the delegation of leadership.⁵⁴ God brings his Israelite family of believers back in fellowship, but acknowledges their need for a caretaker. If Moses were unable to watch over this congregational family, it is possible that they might have become disjointed all over again.

Moses is attempting to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land when Jethro comes to visit see Moses and makes a critical contribution to the development of God's people. The dialogue between these two men provides the reader with a description of family dynamics during that time. Jethro and Moses did not start out as family. Nor did they originally subscribe to the same religion. Jethro worshiped God while Moses worshiped Egyptians gods, as was customary practice for those who grew up in pharaoh's court. Moses comes to know Jethro's God as a result of being welcomed into Jethro's tent (*Genesis* 2:15-25), and Moses marries Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. With the passing of time, Moses is charged by God to deliver the Israelites from bondage. In hopes of keeping his family safe, Moses entrusted the care of his family to his father-in-law, Jethro and departs for Egypt. While in Egypt, Moses clashes with the pharaoh. Jethro has assumed several roles during Moses' absence. When Moses and Jethro are reunited, Jethro is invited to observe Moses as he perform his daily task of governing and pastoring the Israelites.⁵⁵ Jethro has notices that Moses has taken on what appears to be too much

⁵⁴ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁵ Levi Meier, *Moses: the Prince, the Prophet - His Life, Legend and Message for Our Lives* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1999), 133-135.

responsibility. Moses is attempting to be a father to two sons, a husband to his wife, pastor to God's congregation, and an administrator. How much can one man accomplish before he ultimately gives out? Moses needed help.

Genesis 18:13 says, "The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening."⁵⁶ Moses speaks of his duties to sit as judge, but this is not to be understood in our contemporary interpretation of a legal judge. It was Moses' duty to help those who came seeking the counsel of God. Therefore, Moses' responsibilities as judge had much more to do with individuals seeking spiritual guidance or leadership as opposed to those seeking resolution to judicative quarrels.

Jethro observes as Moses attempts to help the Israelites resolve problems and conflicts (*Genesis* 18:13-14). From morning to evening, Moses would attend to the hundreds that had lined up in anticipation of seeking guidance, advice, and wisdom.⁵⁷ As a result of the peoples' nomadic life their daily struggles were intensified and frequent. Even the weather was a constant issue. From May to October the sun was unrelenting, drying up streams and killing vegetation. The winters were bitterly cold. This was exacerbated by the cold wind rolling off the nearby seas. December through February were the wettest months. Spring time was the best, but of all the seasons, spring lasted the least amount of time. They also had to deal with Sirocco, a scorching sand-laden wind that blew in from the eastern desert and harassed their sheep and cattle.⁵⁸ Moses had to help his people deal with environmental concerns.

⁵⁶ NRSV

⁵⁷ Meier, *Moses: the Prince, the Prophet*, 137.

⁵⁸ E. W. Heaton, *Everyday Life in Old Testament Times* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1956), 24.

The Israelites also had to contend with other large aggregations of people who were attempting mass migration. These groups of people were combative. Therefore, encounters with them usually led to battles. While the Israelites ventured to the Promised Land, there were also the Amorites, Hurrians, and various Indo-European groups attempting the same goal.⁵⁹ The migrating bands of people usually saw themselves as very different. However, they had a very similar story. They became nomads in search of a better and free land. Many of them came out of city-states that grew large over time. As they grew larger they subjected their poor to slavery. In an effort to break away from tyranny these groups of people left their respective oppressive lands and migrated in hopes of a better place to live and to raise their families.

The Israelites did not have the luxury of living in a walled city. This made them vulnerable to raids. Marauders could target them because they had no real protection.⁶⁰ Most nations had a wall in order to provide a buffer between themselves and criminals. It was an uneasy feeling to know that the only thing between a sleeping family and danger was the cloth of the tent. Constructing a wall was not a realistic option for the Israelites because they were nomads. They were not in any one place long enough to erect a wall and to enjoy the protection it enabled.

Prior to the Israelites leaving Egypt where the Pharaoh was the ruling authority, it was the responsibility of the Pharaoh to dole out or define justice and to settle disputes. Another defining feature of the nomadic culture was that the father was the master of his own family. His legal jurisdiction extended to all those who were a member of his house.

⁵⁹ Victor M. Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible: an Illustrated Guide to Daily Life in Bible Times*, 3 ed. (Ada: Baker Academic, 2006), 44-45.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

This meant he organized business transactions, arranged marriages, and judged any legal family matter that arose. He governed by 'pater familias.'⁶¹ This is the concept that the father of the house has power over life and death for those in his household. With that in mind, Moses is task with trying to bring together people who have had different perspective as to who should have authority. In a male dominate culture, these nomadic people have only experienced leadership by a tyrant their pharaoh, or the direct rulership of a male dominant family member. Neither description can rightly be attributed to Moses. Yet, it is Moses who must change the culture in order to be heard with the authority as leader/pastor.

The Israelites did not travel on camels. They traveled on donkeys. Other nomads of that time utilized camels because camels provided a faster means of travel and they could travel longer distances across the dessert. Travelers could also drink the milk of the camel if the need arose.⁶² Israel's choice of beast meant that they would travel slowly and that the furniture that they transported had to be lightweight, which usually translated to flimsy furniture. Everything had to be portable. The word portable literally translated to mean furniture that could be rolled up with their tents.

The plight and frequent movement of the Israelites was a prevailing issue matched only with the selfishly motivated actions of their nomadic nature. Judges 17:6, speaks to a persistent concept leading the Israelites to do what they thought was best for them,⁶³ even if their actions came at the detriment of others. Some Israelites were even willing to destroy other families if they thought it could further their own family causes.

⁶¹ Ibid., 42-43.

⁶² Heaton, *Everyday Life in Old Testament Times*, 46-53.

⁶³ Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, 62-63.

The Israelites were shifting from being an enslaved people to an independent people. This meant they had to change mentally and fundamentally. They were also dealing with all the aforementioned daily struggles of nomadic life. Moses was at the center of a people attempting to make a drastic transition as they traverse perilous terrain. Jethro watched as Moses spent the entirety of his day feebly attempting to help a hurting and troubled people.

Moses also had to help his people who had been heavily influenced and often challenged by other religions. God-centered Israeli culture had been eroded by years of pagan influence. They would pray to God, but often included other gods into their rituals. Consequently, they had become susceptible to and accepting of idolatry worship. Moses' great challenge quaked on the precipice that Moses must help his people reconnect with their ancestral religion, a religion rooted in the worship of one God only -Yahweh.

The Israelites come to Moses seeking aid for a myriad of issues. Jethro is moved by the struggle that he sees Moses feebly trying to resolve for ~~help~~ all the Israelites. According to the Midrash,⁶⁴ Jethro's advice to Moses starts with Moses' countenance and his physical appearance. He tells Moses that it is not good to sit while everyone else stands. Jethro thought that this could be inaccurately interpreted as Moses diminishing the honor of the people, a people who came to Moses for counsel.⁶⁵ One such custom related to hospitality admonished the greeter to stand as a sign of welcoming his visitors. If the patriarch of the house sat to converse, it was inappropriate for the visiting party to

⁶⁴ Jewish commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures compiled between AD 200 and 1200 and based on exegesis, parable, and haggadic legend.

⁶⁵ Meier, *Moses: the Prince, the Prophet*, 137.

remain standing and not be invited to sit.⁶⁶ Neglecting to make such an invitation would have been seen as a sign of dishonor, and at times an act of aggression. It could also be interpreted that the patriarch of the house had not fully welcomed his quest. Both parties were to stand or sit together. The invitation to sit reassured guests that they have been warmly and properly received.

As we continue on Moses' journey as a leader, God provides help for Moses as reflected in *Exodus* 18:17 Jethro emerges as a leader. Jethro tells Moses that he (Moses) cannot handle the task of helping this congregation of people alone. It is interesting that Moses even attempts to be the sole leader of the Israelites. Not even in the beginning of Moses' journey as liberator from Egypt was he the lone agitator to pharaoh. In *Exodus* 4, God challenges Moses to go into Egypt to free the Israelites. *Exodus* 4:10-14 shows us that Moses is hesitant to go. Moses gives God an excuse in hopes that God might find another person to complete the tasks. Moses tells God that he is not a good speaker. Even after God assures Moses he will speak for him, Moses tries to avoid the calling of leadership that God has appointed him.

It is at that point in the scripture that God sends Aaron to accompany Moses. *Exodus* 4:14 tells us, "Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "What of your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad."⁶⁷ It is noted that Aaron has the gift of speech. Moses has oration as a deficiency in his leadership skills, but God does not disqualify Moses because of it. Rather, God sends someone to Moses to help him in an area of need. Often it is preached that Moses went into Egypt with nothing

⁶⁶ Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, 71.

⁶⁷ NRSV

but God's promise and a stick (Moses' staff). Yet, the scripture assures us that Moses was not alone. Moses went into Egypt with God's promise, a stick, and help in the form of his brother Aaron.

Moses ventured into pharaoh's court to demand the release of God's people. This is the famous showdown between the might of God against the might of pharaoh's magicians. *Exodus* 7:9-15 gives a detailed account of those proceedings. Pharaoh challenges Moses to perform a wonder on behalf of God. The suggested wonder allows Moses to take his staff and to turn it into a snake. *Exodus* 7:10 states, "So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the Lord had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and Pharaoh's officials, and it became a snake."⁶⁸ Pharaoh's magicians proceed to do the same wonder with their own staffs. Take note that it is not Moses whose staff is turned into a snake. It is Aaron. God had always placed someone in Moses' life to aid him in the progression of the Israelites.

One might argue that Moses knew before the arrival of Jethro that his current model for administration was a failing one, but Moses continued it because he wanted to have sole authority over the Israelites. However, Moses' quick acceptance of Jethro's delegation proposal negates that argument. Perhaps when Jethro suggests to Moses in *Exodus* 18 the need for him to seek help, Moses recalls how in the past the assistance of others had proven most advantageous.

The formula for Jethro's delegation is simple. *Exodus* 18:19 reads, "Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and

⁶⁸ Ibid.

instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do.”⁶⁹ Moses is not advised to stop leading the Israelites, but to seek help in leading.

Moses will remain the key herald for God. Going forward he will involve others to assist in bringing Godly counsel. This shifts the pastoral possibilities from the efforts of a soloist to the chorus of a divine counsel.

Moses is not relinquishing authority. This is a key aspect in the design of the original multi-site church. Moses does not renounce his role as leader. Instead, He shares it, but remains the head. This is the multi-site church amplified dynamically. In the multi-site church, there can be multiple pastors, who collaboratively plan and tend to their respective congregations and communities. Overall, however, there still remains one particular individual who is responsible for the wellbeing of the collective body. That individual for the Israelites was Moses.

Jethro advises Moses to serve as mentor and teacher to individuals who can help bare the load of counseling the Israelites. According to *Exodus* 18:20, Moses’ lessons should not be solely judiciary, but they should include spiritual matters as well. Moses’ job was two-fold. First, he had to advocate on behalf of the people. Secondly, he had to interpret God’s will to effectively teach the people.⁷⁰ In order for Moses to properly perform his task of judgment in a judicial manner, he had to impart the ordinances of God in a spiritual manner.

Moses did not attempt to find and train community judges. He attempted to find a community pastor. *Exodus* 18:21-22 explains the functionality of Jethro’s proposed new

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Barker, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 96.

pastoral system. Jethro tells Moses, “You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain...” Looking for able men among all the people meant Moses was to look at all candidates. Not just his usual circle of people. By utilizing the search, seek, and find God fearing leaders among you approach, this would give people a chance to serve who may have otherwise been overlooked. Their leadership course consisted of instructions in decrees, laws, the way to live, and the duties each judge was to perform.⁷¹

Jethro also tells Moses that the chosen individuals should be trustworthy leaders as opposed to leaders who are not satisfied with their station, and begin to seek higher office and evolve into untrustworthy leaders. Untrustworthy people can be very harmful if they are fighting from within an organization. Inward bickering has the ability to damage the entire infrastructure of the church. This is why Moses had to be careful about whom he allowed to assume leadership positions in the Israelite congregation.

The last admonishment of character, is hate dispersed through dishonest gain, is not connected to or concerned with any theological mishandling by appointed pastors. It is speaking to the likelihood of bribery and economic manipulation.⁷² Being in a place of authority will certainly produce those who want to take advantage of such behavior. If money becomes a motivator for those who sit in a place of power, they have failed not only their duty, but also have violated their Godly charge. Such a violation will ultimately

⁷¹ Ibid., 96-97.

⁷² Walter Brueggemann et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 827.

lead to that particular individual seeking the pleasure of money and not the counsel of God.

Teaching people to share responsibility was new. Teaching them to seek assistance outside of their own household was even newer. The primary system of authority in the time of Moses generally rested on the shoulders of one person. This person was usually the patriarch of a household. It was the practice of one-man adjudication.⁷³ Moses was attempting something radical. He was willing to share responsibility in an effort to supply every Israelite community with Godly counsel.

Exodus 18:21-22 says, "... set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you." It is here that scripture references these appointees chosen by Moses as judges. It has already been established that a correct understanding for Moses' role as judge was that of spiritual leader and pastor. Accordingly, a contemporary title for these new judges could certainly be 'site-pastors.' *Exodus* 18:21-22 explains how these site-pastors (judges) are supposed to serve their communities.

They are given a specific community for which they provide care. The scripture acknowledges that some communities will be larger than others. Every judge was not meant to oversee a mega community. Some were ordained to counsel as few as ten. Jethro does not advise Moses to treat the judges differently based on the size of the people they serve. It is implied that the works of one is no greater than the works of another. No special distinction is given to one judge over another. They are all judges

⁷³ Brueggemann., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 827.

helping their respective communities of God's people. Furthermore, communities were not meant to be identical, yet each was expected to receive adequate care. Some numbered the thousands, others hundreds, a number of them fifties, and the rest tens. None given preferential treatment. All of them were considered important to God's ministry.

When a community issue is not minor the site-pastor of that community was instructed to bring the matter to Moses. By deciphering the severity of the issue, site-pastors paved the pathway for Moses to function as overseer of the Israelites without getting bogged down by every community issues. Moses is able to do more by allowing other people the chance to share in the leadership role. More people's needs are being addressed. Communities were being strengthened. In Moses we see the wise implementation and sharing of Godly leadership as Moses not only received all of Jethro's ideas but also put into practice.⁷⁴ This became a turning point for religion wherein Moses' evolution and leadership model shift and congregational dynamics are forever changed.

Understanding the structure of Moses' church and congregational dealing has significance and brings much clarity to our discussion of the multi-site church. The congregational management that Moses employed with his congregation became the foundation for Jewish religion and eventually helped to shape the Christian church in the writings of *Acts*. Although Moses was not the first to worship God,⁷⁵ Moses was the founder of the Israelite religion. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshiped God long before

⁷⁴ Exodus 18:23-24

⁷⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Religion: Moab-Nuad*. vol. 10. (1986) s.v. "Moses as the Founder of Israelite Religion."

the coming of Moses. However, it is through Moses' leadership that the worship of Yahweh alone resumed its rightful place and centuries later forms the monotheistic concept that we know now. Exodus 6:2-3, says, "God also spoke to Moses and said to him: 'I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'The Lord' I did not make myself known to them.'"⁷⁶ Prior to this understanding of God, the forefathers worshiped him as El Shaddai.

It is at Sinai that Moses presents the commandments of God to his congregation. The first and second commandments of the Decalogue stress the sole worship of Yahweh. These two commandments further set in motion the expungement and rejection of all images of God.⁷⁷ This meant that even Moses himself did not speak as God, but for God. It was important that no leader of God's congregation makes himself as a god to the people. The Israelites have just come out of enslavement from pharaohs who thought themselves gods. Moses knew personally the dangers of governing people with the poisonous mentality of self-made godship. He grew up in the household of a pharaoh who subjected nations of people to his, 'I am god' complex.

Knowing these truths of godship, it is very providential that God inspires Moses to establish with the Israelites that there is no God but Yahweh. This becomes very helpful when Moses needs to appoint new site-pastors and assign community judges. As Moses established judges (pastors) he did not have to be concerned with each judge becoming a god with his particular community. Judges were expected to do as Moses did. They would speak for God and not become God. This is significant because if every

⁷⁶ NRSV

⁷⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Religion: Moab-Nuad.* vol. 10. (1986) s.v. "Moses as the Founder of Israelite Religion."

community of the Israelites began to see its individual judge and spiritual leader as God, it would ultimately rip at the fabric of their society. Moses was able to have site-pastors in many communities without creating an environment that ignited a desire within localized pastors to become local demigods.

Exodus eighteen is a blueprint for establishing multi-site churches. Thus it is evident, that Moses does not use this portion of scripture to address judges as a judicial governing body. It is not until *Numbers* 11:16-30, that Moses approaches the concept of multiple governing bodies.⁷⁸ One can concur that Jethro gave Moses sage advice. Moses listened because he knew that in order to effectively reach his total community he needed help. This help came through the appointment of judges who would faithfully serve their communities. These community pastors enabled every community to be properly cared for, as they met the needs of their constituents.

A Vote of Confidence

Moses gave birth to the multi-site church structure during the exodus of the Israelites. The book of *Acts* gives an account of the early history of the Christian church. The book contains many great speeches given by the early church formers. It also includes various struggles of the early church to find a place of acceptance in both the world of Jew and the Gentiles. Luke shows how conflict, even among the leaders of the church, can find resolution if individuals are willing to dialogue and seek the mind of Christ.⁷⁹ Luke writes *Acts* as if he is in conversation with a Roman official named Theophilus (*Acts* 1:1). It is believed that Theophilus was a Roman official because in

⁷⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Religion: Moab-Nuad.* vol. 10. (1986) s.v. "Moses as Leader."

⁷⁹ I. Howard Marshall, ed., *Witness to the Gospel: the Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 5-7.

Luke 1:3, Theophilus is referred to as ‘most excellent.’⁸⁰ This was not a Jewish title, but it was Roman. Jewish people were not in the habit of giving such lofty titles to each other.

Acts shows the growth of the Christian ministry through two primary figures. The first biblical figure is Peter. The initial twelve chapters of *Acts* show Peter as the leader of God’s Christian movement. Peter emerged as the single most important leader in the early days of *Acts*. Here we find Peter being listed first among the eleven disciples who remained (1:13). Peter’s journey provides a pivotal point that transforms him from being a confused follower to becoming a strong disciple. Peter undertakes a leadership role in which he determines who would replace Judas. On the Day of Pentecost Peter preached very effectively to the crowd. Some of the people who witnessed the Pentecost event were confused by what they had seen. Peter explained the intoxication of the Spirit to the questioning crowds (*Acts* 2). In the following chapter of *Acts*, Peter and John heal a lame man. This act gives Peter an opportunity to address the crowds concerning the Gospel of Jesus. Peter and John are arrested. Once again Peter takes this event as an opportunity to introduce nonbelievers to Jesus the Christ. Peter was willing to address crowds and he grew in notoriety because of that fact. Peter went on to pronounce the sentence of death upon Ananias and Sapphira for lying to God. By the fifth chapter of *Acts*, Peter is so revered in Jerusalem that people begin to think that even Peter’s shadow would mediate the healing presence of God. Peter becomes not just a preacher, but a miracle worker.⁸¹ His post-Calvary journey redefines him and transforms him from a confused disciple, to a respected leader of the new Christian movement.

⁸⁰ ‘most excellent’ according to NRSV

⁸¹ Bart D. Ehrman, *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 60-65.

The second key biblical figure who was instrumental in shaping the Christian church in the book of *Acts* is Paul. Paul a man from Tarsus was originally known in the Jewish Christian community as Saul. He had ties to the Pharisees and Sanhedrin sects. Commissioned by the Roman government to squelch the new movement of Jesus, Paul attempts to protect the Jewish faith by becoming a persecutor of Christians. During this period of his life, Paul has a personal experience with God on the road to Damascus. The result of this experience is the conversion that leads to becoming a follower of Christ (*Acts* 9). Paul becomes a profound speaker for the Christian faith. Paul's journeyed to spread Christianity takes him to many communities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The book of *Acts* gives an account of Paul's attempts to reach as many people with the Gospel in as many places as he could.

Paul wrote many epistles that later became books in our modern biblical canon. The authenticity of Pauline's authorship for various letters in the New Testament has been a focal point of scholarly debate. However, most biblical scholars agree that Paul authored at least eight letters. Those letters include *Romans*, *1 Corinthians*, *2 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *Philippians*, *Philemon*, and *2 Thessalonians*.⁸² This does not mean that Paul did not write the other epistles that are accredited to him. This simply means the Pauline letters are subject to more scrutiny. The Controversy surrounding his Pauline authorship of the seven New Testament letters are paralleled only to the controversy associated with his pre-Christian behavior of persecuting Christians, coupled with his theology of inclusion.

It is in the book of *Acts* that various aspects of early Christian life illuminated. One such aspect is the continuation of the multi-site church movement that began with

⁸² *The Encyclopedia of Religion: nubu-prim*. vol. 11. (1986) s.v. "Paul the Apostle."

Moses. The reader readily sees how the relational ties between the early churches helped to shape their organizational structures. *Acts* 15 gives a detailed example of multi-site church dynamics. This chapter brings both Peter and Paul together and has allowed the reader to see how both of these influential biblical figures approached the concept of multi-site churches. *Acts* 15 also tells us what each figure thought it would take for a multi-site church to function effectively.

In antiquity, those who held fast to the belief or teaching that circumcision was essential to salvation became known as Judaizers. *Acts* 15:1 informs us that men traveled from Judea to Antioch to teach that unless a man is circumcised he cannot be saved. Their arrival in Antioch may have been spurred by an earlier report given by John (*Acts* 13:13). John had observed Paul's acceptance of Gentiles,⁸³ However, these visitors from Jerusalem purported that were indeed teaching circumcision according the customs of Moses. At this time, Gentiles have become a major part of the congregation in Antioch. The visiting Judaizers are not telling the Gentiles that they cannot be a part of the Christian church, they are telling the church in Antioch that unless the Gentiles become circumcised they are baseless in their claim to salvation.

The men from Judea came to deliver a message, which also ignited controversy. Those who followed the Mosaic Law believed that circumcision was a sign of the covenant relationship between God and those who followed God. During the time of Abraham, until the coming of Jesus, circumcision had become the standard indicator of those who were aligned with God. In 168 B.C., Syrian rulers attempted not only to halt all Jews from continuing the practice of circumcision, but also to squelch Judaism. An army of Jewish believers began to rebel against their Syrian oppressors. This Maccabean

⁸³ Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John - Acts* vol. 9. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 442-443.

revolt saved Judea from genocide.⁸⁴ Once the revolt was over Gentiles were allowed to stay in their land but with one stipulation they had to become circumcised.

Gentiles were culturally opposed to circumcisions. They often viewed circumcisions as barbaric, vulgar, or repugnant. This is not because Gentiles were repulsed by the naked body. In their society, nudity was a public norm in the context of gymnasiums, athletic events, and baths. Circumcisions were thought to be so savage that during the Maccabean in 160 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes outlawed circumcisions and imposed a death penalty to those who enforced the practice. Even mothers caught with circumcised babies would be killed.⁸⁵ Understanding the volatile history of circumcision, one can see how the men of *Acts* 15:1 delivered a very divisive message. The issue of circumcision had religious, cultural, and societal ramifications.

Acts 15:2 lets the reader know that Paul does not agree with the message that has been brought from Judea and neither does Barnabas, Paul's traveling companion. Paul believes that circumcision is not needed to further the movement of establishing the Christian church nor is he attempting to conform to the Greco-Roman society in which he lives. He is not folding to cultural pressure. Paul has experienced God. He has experienced the love of Christ and has been forgiven for persecuting the church. In Paul's powerful encounters with God, never did God inform Paul to be the messenger of circumcision. Instead, God charged Paul to be the messenger of the Gospel. Paul believed

⁸⁴ Walter Harriston, *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism*, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 290-291

⁸⁵ Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts* vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 354-355.

that just as Christ accepted him that anyone who believe in Christ would be accepted and granted the gift of salvation. Thus, Paul's experience with Christ shaped his soteriology.

It is worth noting, that the reason why Paul and Barnabas are in Antioch is that they are the individuals who started the church there. It is through their teaching and preaching that God allowed the church to grow. It is amusing that after Paul and Barnabas have toiled to build the Christian church there that outsiders arrived to reshape it. Paul was a prolific organizer of the church, but even he was not bigger than the issue of circumcision. Paul, Barnabas, and the representatives from Judea disagreed vehemently on the issue of circumcision. Thus, marks the two men's trip. It is in Jerusalem that the matter in the Antioch church is resolved.

Verse two of *Acts* 15 reveals several realities. Firstly, the newly formed church of Antioch is not autonomous. There is a direct relationship between the church of Jerusalem and the church in Antioch.⁸⁶ Although the two churches are in separate places, they operate with a connectedness. The church of Jerusalem is serving as a parent body to newly formed churches. It is the intent of the church at Jerusalem to guide newly formed churches knowing that to do so is to grow theologically healthy churches. The church of Jerusalem assumes the role of 'parent church.'

Paul, Barnabas, and the other individuals who journeyed to Jerusalem were greeted by the apostles and elders upon their arrival (*Acts* 15:3-4). The church of Jerusalem is the epicenter for the fervent push to minister to as many people as possible. As the early church grew in numbers and impacted communities, they acquired various monikers. They started out as a sect comprised of Jewish Christians. Later, they were

⁸⁶ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Carlisle, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 451.

referred to as ‘the brethren,’ ‘the way,’ or ‘the Nazarenes.’⁸⁷ The church of Jerusalem was a new sect among many sects and was much like the surge of churches in our culture today with nearly a church on every corner. When the church of Jerusalem rose to prominence, it was at a time when there seemed to be a religious sect in every community.

There were two factions within the Jerusalem church, the Hebrew and the Hellenist. *Acts* 6 addresses a matter of contention between these two groups regarding the handling of widows in daily food distribution. Hebrews were born and raised in Palestine and were not commonly open to Greek culture and are believed to have spoken Aramaic as their primary language. Hellenists were a group who knew Aramaic, but commonly spoke Greek. The Hellenists embraced a Greek-influenced lifestyle.⁸⁸ The Jerusalem church was experiencing a culture clash with the non-traditional populous confronting the traditional. Nuance challenged stationed practice.

It was inward bickering that impelled missionaries to leave Jerusalem and preach the Gospel of Jesus. They sought out the Diaspora. The Diaspora referred to the Jews who were displaced in areas and countries outside of Palestine after the Babylonian captivity. The mission to find Jews outside of Palestine also led to mission encounters with Gentiles. These non-Jewish people created more of a multi-cultural community than even that of the Jerusalem church. In Jerusalem they dealt with the differences between Hebrews and Hellenists. In a congregation like that of Antioch, the constituents’ makeup grew in complexity and in acceptance of one another. In Antioch the congregation

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Wigoder, Shalom M. Paul, Benedict T. Viviano, *Almanac of the Bible*, 1st ed. (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991), 360-361.

⁸⁸ Wigoder, *Almanac of the Bible*, 390-391.

embraced Hebrews, Hellenists, the Diaspora, and Gentiles. It is ironic that an issue of accepting those who are different has made its way back to the Jerusalem church where it started. Jerusalem's tepidness of acceptance had indirectly given birth to a multi-cultural church in Antioch.

How does Luke view his present generation in *Acts*? His perception of his generation comes as a direct result of what he has seen them do. Luke is a witness to Jesus' ten references to 'this generation' in the Gospels. From those statements, Jesus paints a vivid portrait of the Jewish generation as a collective hindrance. That generation was critical of John the Baptist, and equally critical of Jesus. Both John the Baptist and Jesus had different approaches to their ministry, but neither approach seemed to be good enough for the generation in which they lived.⁸⁹ These profound differences in styles of delivery may be what led Luke to refer to his generation in *Acts* 2:40 as corrupt. Although Luke purports his generation as corrupt, he shows them as having redeeming qualities through his recounting of the council in Jerusalem. They have an ability to crush an upstart church, which would be corrupt. Or they could aid in their development, which would be redeeming.

In *Acts* 2:5, Luke recounts that the Pharisees were the first to speak in the church council assembly. It is not surprising that they are the most vocal opponents declaring that new converts should not remain uncircumcised.⁹⁰ However, what is surprising is the very presence of the Pharisees, one of the oldest and most conservative religious sects of the Jewish culture, has found a way to have an influential voice on the council concerning

⁸⁹ Marshall, *Witness to the Gospel*, 135-139.

⁹⁰ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 356.

the new Christian church movement. The Pharisees were traditionalist who believed it was their life's work to protect the Mosaic Law. People like the Pharisees, who's life goal was to keep Mosaic Law relevant were out of place in a community seeking to lift up a new standard in Christ. The Pharisees not only recommend that the church of Antioch enforce circumcisions, but also the others Mosaic mandates. If the Pharisees' position on circumcision is embraced, the Jerusalem church will decide it is better to be law givers than soul savers.

It is further believed that the Pharisees' concern also condemned table fellowship with sinners. They thought that all believers should commit themselves to purity. When a community remained pure before God that behavior allowed them to resist the profane world.⁹¹ Purity was obtained through exclusivity which specifically required an individual to avoid sin-centered contamination by refraining from being around unclean individuals. Gentiles were considered to be inherently unclean.

Paul also speaks about the issue of purity and table fellowship as it pertained to the church in Antioch. In Paul's letter to the church in Galatia, he addressed the continuing division between the circumcised Jewish Christian and the uncircumcised Gentile Christian. Paul said that the leaders of the church in Jerusalem made only one request of his mission, that he remembers the poor (Paul references Peter). Paul further recalls how when Peter arrived in Antioch he would eat freely at the table of Jewish and Gentile Christians. They shared a common table confirming that Christ is Lord of all Christians regardless of race, class, or sex. From that one can ascertain the importance of fellowship and conclude that it is not Christian to deny fellowship to those who are not

⁹¹ Robert W. Wall, J. Paul Sampley, N. T. Wright, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Acts - First Corinthians* vol. 10. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), p. 206-207.

like you. Jesus did not come to redeem one particular race, class, or sex. He came to redeem the world so that we might all sit together with all our differences at one common table of love.

In verse six we are told that the elders and apostles meet in Jerusalem to decide how Antioch should proceed. By verse twelve, Luke writes ‘the whole assembly’ (πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος). By the time the reader arrives at verse twenty-two, the assembly has grown and Luke makes reference to ‘the whole church’ (ὅλη τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ).⁹² The situation involving the Antioch church was important to the overall Christian movement. Accordingly, congregants came to see this heavily debated issue. They understood that the decision concerning Antioch would affect other Jerusalem church sites.

Peter is the first to speak addressing the current issue (*Acts* 6-11). In his speech, Peter reestablishes three points that he had already discussed in *Acts* 10-11. Peter had previously expressed that the decision to preach to Gentiles was God’s choice not his. Peter did so in obedience to God. Second, the evidence of God’s approval of ministering to the Gentiles is evident in the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter tells the council that the Gentiles have received the Holy Spirit just as he (Peter) and others have. Lastly, because God has cleaned the Gentiles they are no longer unclean. Clean should no longer be a term solely determined by one’s status as a Jew. Peter says we are all made clean in Christ. In a powerfully moving conclusion, Peter states that Gentiles cannot be denied access into the body of the church by human decision, because they were already admitted by their belief and faith in the divine.⁹³ These are bold words. Peter is asserting

⁹² Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 444.

that Spirit trumps law. He is further stating that authority does not rest with man. It becomes our duty to accept God's authority, not force our perspective and opinion onto others. Peter becomes Paul's ally in this matter. Both men believe that circumcision is not an indicator of salvation. The church of Antioch is growing. Souls are being saved. It would be a mistake to think that what works at the Jerusalem church must be reproduced in Antioch.

Peter also poses a question to the council in Jerusalem. He asks why the council is considering a direction that test God (*Acts* 15:10). Peter tells his Pharisaic brethren that their course of action is equivalent to unbelief the same situation that Moses continually faced with the Israelites who tested God through their doubt of God's power. The council risked making the same mistake if they doubted that God had the power to save in the absence of circumcision. Peter claims that a salvation dependant on circumcision is tantamount to places on a yoke on Gentiles. Yokes were harness put around the neck and front legs of a farm animal. Yokes were commonly used for plowing or wagon pulling purposes.⁹⁴ Yoke language was used to imply a burden placed on another. Peter tells the council that making Gentiles comply with circumcisions and other Mosaic laws is giving Gentiles an unnecessary burden. Peter reminds them that not even they, the devote Jews from birth, have not been able to follow the laws. Jesus commented, "Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them" (*Luke* 11:46).⁹⁵ Peter simply echoes Jesus' sentiment it to the council.

⁹³ James L. Mays, ed., *Harper's Bible Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 1098-1099.

⁹⁴ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 357-358.

Acts 15:12 reveals that after Peter's impassioned plea, silence falls. Peter's reiteration of Jesus' sentiments is the turning point of the conversation with the council.⁹⁶ The council is no longer full of people clamoring to be heard. The tension of the issue at Antioch has now spilled over into vicious arguing. It has bubbled over to spirit led reflection. The council event of the Jerusalem church had transitioned from a judicial meeting, into a profound preaching moment. Fortunately, there was a preacher in the house. His name was Paul. Both Paul and Barnabas seize the moment of silence and to begin to share with those in attendance the miracle and wonders God performed in Antioch. These wonders were not tied to neither laws nor circumcision, but bestowed to humanity because of God's grace. The Antioch congregation was different from Jerusalem's in location and congregational makeup. Yet, the people of Antioch were experiencing the same grace of God as those in the Jerusalem church.

Peter has testified and Paul has preached. It is at this point that James rises to speak (*Acts* 15:13) It is incumbent upon James to help bring resolution to the events that have unfolded before them. James has influence on the council. This shows the reader that Peter did not remain the leader of this new Christian movement throughout *Acts*. In *Acts* 10, Peter baptizes a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. That action shows us that Cornelius, being a Gentile, could be baptized without the permission of anyone other than the Holy Spirit. Sometime after the baptism of Cornelius, Peter did not continue his leadership within the Jerusalem Christian community. At some point between *Acts* 10 and *Acts* 15 the load of leadership moved to James. Peter was squeezed out of leadership because he was open to Gentile conversions. It is believed that the Hebrews faction of the

⁹⁵ NRSV

⁹⁶ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 445.

Jerusalem church orchestrated Peter's loss of power. The Hebrews would have been against Peter's theology of inclusiveness for the Gentiles. Because James did not share Peter's compassion, James was embraced by conservative Jews. James was the brother of Jesus. It is interesting that all four canonized Gospels make generous space for Peter, but remain almost silent about Jesus' brothers. The few times that Jesus' family is mentioned, it is done in a monotone fashion.⁹⁷ Observe *Mark* 3:21, 31, 35, and *John* 7:3-10. In all the aforementioned scriptures of Christ's family, there is a lack of substance and depth. So, it is interesting that James, an uncelebrated brother rises to power in the Jerusalem church. Almost ten years have passed since Peter baptized Cornelius.⁹⁸ Peter lost stature in the church as a result of his boldness. Now in this collected council of the Jerusalem church, the fruits of Peter's labor come to fruition.

James begins his address by referring to Peter as Simon (*Acts* 15:14). One cannot help but wonder if James is referring to Peter by his old name with ulterior motives. After all, Simon is the hot tempered denier while Peter is referred to as the rock upon which Jesus would build his church (*Matthew* 16:18). Perhaps, James is trying to assert that Peter is fit to testify, but not calm enough to lead. Keep in mind, Peter is not the only key figure addressing the council who has been renamed. Paul also has been renamed. Subliminally, James could be been trying to remind the council that not very long ago Paul was persecuting Jews. Now, Paul stands as a prominent church site builder, but can a man with such a problematic background be trusted to lead? Yet, taking into account

⁹⁷ Martin Hengel, *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 29-32.

⁹⁸ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 445.

the charged situation, James may have spoken with pure intentions, but one must admit that James' word choice was odd.

Peter metaphorical gave the Gentile Christians a voice. This allowed the entrance of Paul. After Peter and Paul began preaching 'Christian inclusion,' James became target of the council. Perhaps as a result of that pressure, James gives his approval. His speech of acceptance takes shape in *Acts* 15:14:21.

One might expect James' initial response to the council to be tepid. After all, this is not the first time James has dealt with the issue of bringing gentiles into the fold of Christianity. He has known that Gentile converts have been knocking at the door of acceptance and inclusion in the church since the baptism of Cornelius. Given James' history of attempting to block the tide of Gentiles converts, his statements in *Acts* 15:16-18 are very bold.

James skillfully weaves several scriptures together to make his case for an inclusive God.⁹⁹ *Amos* 9:11-12 says, "On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this." *Jeremiah* 12:15, "And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again to their heritage and to their land, everyone of them." James also uses *Isaiah* 45:21, "Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me." By combining those three scriptures, James tells the

⁹⁹ Mays, *Harper's Bible Commentary*, 1099.

council that including Gentiles among God's chosen was God's divine plan all along.

James transfuses those scriptures into the bold proclamation of *Acts* 15:16-18:

16 "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, **17** so that all other peoples may seek the Lord— even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things **18** known from long ago.¹⁰⁰

James states that originally God did not include Gentiles when the covenant with Abraham was established. The Israelites were solely chosen to be the people of God. However, James does not believe that God intended it to be that way forever. James makes a major contribution to the decision regarding the church in Antioch. He showed a willingness to move the conversation from the conversion of Gentiles from a proselyte model to an eschatological one. James affirms that people will be comprised of two groups. The core will be Israel. This was implied by referring to the rebuilding of David's dwelling. Assembled around the Israelites will be the Gentiles. James calls them the remnant.¹⁰¹ Remnants may give the imagery of those who are the leftover or overlooked. However, 'remnant' is not used by James as a derogatory term. It was simply James' designation for all those who were not Jewish. The council began to see their own views of Christ as very limited. They had enforced manmade limits on the divine. Fortunately, those limits were being removed from God. The council allows a new perspective of a God who is more than merely a God over a select group of people, but a God who is sovereign over all people.

¹⁰⁰ NRSV

¹⁰¹ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 446.

James echoes Peter's sentiment that it would not be wise to make things difficult for Gentiles seeking Christ (*Acts* 15:19). Accordingly, James proposes a guideline for the congregation in Antioch to follow. In his guideline one can see how his Judaizer background is informing his suggestions. Every suggestion has foundation in Mosaic Law. Firstly, James request that the congregation in Antioch resist pollution brought on by idols. Specifically, James does not want them to eat meat that was sacrificed to false gods. This concept can be found in *Leviticus* 17:8-9.¹⁰² Hebrews thought it was very important to conduct one's self in a manner that did not defile the body. Eating things that had been pledged or sacrificed to gods was believed to be an easy way to take something externally dirty and make one's self internally unclean.

Secondly, James recommends that Christians abstain from sexual immorality. Luke describes sexually immorality as 'πορνείας,' which is translated as any kind of sexual activity outside of the bond of marriage. However, the concepts of what was sexually acceptable were much more relaxed in the Roman and Greek cultures than in the early Christian church culture.¹⁰³ Following Christ would come at the expense of compromising the fulfillment of certain carnal delights. For some gentiles this would be a completely new concept because the worship of some idols included sexual deeds.

Lastly, the church of Antioch is asked to refrain from eating the meat of strangled animals and from blood. These restrictions are rooted in *Leviticus* 17:10-16. James recommends that they do not eat from any animal where the blood has not been drained from the body. Founders of the early church believed that demons inhabited blood of

¹⁰² Mays, *Harper's Bible Commentary*, 1099.

¹⁰³ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible*, 360-361.

animals used for idolatrous purposes. Paul gives believers a warning. He states, “No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons” (I Cor. 10:20).¹⁰⁴ Thus, coming into contact with tainted blood is akin to being in contact with demonic spirits. Demonic presence would not be advantageous to new converts. James believed that if the Gentiles in the Antioch church followed his prescribed guidelines they could break the harmful habits of their idolatrous past. This would not only strengthen the gentiles, but it would make the Antioch congregation healthier as a whole.

Acts 15:22-29 recounts how the council’s decision of inclusion makes its way back to the city Antioch. The council agrees with the guidelines that James has introduced and put them in a letter that was sent to the church in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas will go back to Antioch. Lest we forget, it is Paul and Barnabas who started the church in Antioch in the first place. The Jerusalem church decides to send two of their own congregants to Antioch. They choose Judas and Silas to assure that Paul delivers the letter. The letter further states that Judas and Silas are being sent to help not hinder them. Judas and Silas are supposed to verbalize anything that the letter did not clarify. Sending this letter to the congregants of Antioch gives the reader an idea of the influence the Jerusalem church had over other church locations.

The congregation at Antioch gathered to receive the letter sent by the Jerusalem church (*Acts* 15:30-31). Letters were typically read aloud to groups, and the reasons vary. Some people may have been illiterate. Therefore, reading messages aloud meant everyone received important news. The congregants in Antioch were undoubtedly

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 361-362.

anxious to get the verdict from Jerusalem. Some of them were probably curious to know if the Pharisaic Christians would leave the gentile faction of their congregation out of acceptance.¹⁰⁵ The news was read. Gentiles could be a part of the Antioch congregation without circumcision. They heard the good news and rejoiced. The Antioch church was unique in its comprisal. Their congregational landscape differed from the Jerusalem church. Reassured by the Jerusalem council, the church at Antioch received notice that being different and unique would not become an albatross about their necks or a hindrance to their acceptance as Christians.

The Jerusalem church made their decision regarding Antioch's situation by employing multiple ideologies. First, there is a process of discernment which involves the gift of recognizing God's activity. Second, the interpretation of scripture, which is done in an effort to understand the growth and development of the church in Antioch. Third, the council at the church at Jerusalem openly discuss circumcision dilemma because they believe that conversation is an essential part of reaching a clarified resolution to problems. Lastly, the decision made by the church at Jerusalem showed their willingness to consent to following leadership.¹⁰⁶ Observing all four of these ideologies shows us that the church of Jerusalem not only acknowledged they were connected to Antioch, but were also responsible for the well-being of the church at Antioch.

Two pivotal questions are birthed out of the council's experience at the Jerusalem church.¹⁰⁷ The first question is theologically based. Is circumcision necessary for

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 363.

¹⁰⁶ Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 451.

¹⁰⁷ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 448.

salvation? The council of the Jerusalem church makes a drastic change from their tradition. Judaic customs strongly asserted salvation must be accompanied by circumcision. The practice of circumcision was not only a part of their Jewish religion, it was rooted in their culture. When the Jerusalem church changed the requirement for circumcision, they created a spiritual and societal shift. Circumcision could no longer be used as a foregone conclusion of kinship with God. The council raised a second question. Could Gentiles assimilate into a Christian lifestyle? The council believed that gentiles could follow Christ if they were willing to abandon idolatrous practices knowing that the worship of idols would cause them to become unclean. It also meant making themselves vulnerable to the influence of demonic spirits.

The reverberations of the decision made by the Jerusalem church were far reaching. Luke tells us how the council's decision effected the church communities in Antioch of Syria (*Acts* 15:30-30), Syria and Cilicia (*Acts* 15:36-41), and southern Galatia (*Acts* 16:1-4).¹⁰⁸ One church, the Jerusalem church, the parent church, had significant sway over several other church locations. The good news of inclusive salvation spread like a wildfire.

Acts 15 supplies us with an excellent model for multi-site church individuality. The differences in Antioch are discussed and decided in Jerusalem. This act displayed the relationship between these two congregations. Although the two churches are in different places, serving different communities, they operate under the same person of authority. The council in Jerusalem concludes that they will not attempt to shape the congregation in their own image. It is decided that if the people of Antioch can serve God with the

¹⁰⁸ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John – Acts*, 451-453.

same theology as demonstrated in Jerusalem, they can forgo the yoke of some Jewish customs. Simply put, the recipe for a fruitful multi-site church system is one that shares the same theology, but has varying methodologies that allow each church to grow according to the needs of the community it serves.

Three Continents, One Spirit

Effective ministry is one that becomes a living part of its community. A church has the ability to influence its community and surroundings. This does not negate the notion that as ministry is affecting its area, it is also being affected by its community. A church cannot be effective unless it takes into consideration the context of its community. In doing so, churches morph into a unique microcosm reflecting its community's needs, issues, and concerns. History has recorded great religious movements that swept across large areas. Studying such movements illuminates a symbiotic relationship between the church and its community. An observation of history shows that ministry shifts according to the community it is in. This often results in a unique identity growing from an already existing religious movement.

The researcher will examine the effects of Calvinism on three different and distinct communities. This is not a theological assessment of Calvinism. It is a historical observation of the social imprint of Calvinism in varying communities. The purpose of this discussion is to analyze the cultural effects it had on varying communities. This will show how one theological concept, placed in three different communities, can influence those communities in very different ways. The historical landscapes under observation are the revolutionized European community, the purified British community, and the reawakened Colonial American community.

Europe

The evolution of the world has been driven by community change. One group of people finds an innovative way of doing something and it begins to spread to the surrounding populous. The growth of industrialization illustrates this point. Historians have attempted to pinpoint the actual cause of industrial revolution. The industrial revolution was a period of time characterized by the emergence and development of industries during the 1700's. During this time, factory manufacturing systems, division of labor, and mechanization were developed. These developments were also accompanied by the implementation of commodity systems such as money, labor and land, which saw factories; emerge as commercial systems.¹⁰⁹ It has been argued that industrial revolution was necessitated by the need to increase production and provide for a growing population. It has been further argued that such a development was facilitated by availability of labor, market, fertile lands, accumulated capital, and favorable climate for agriculture. Those arguments leave out a key contributing factor. The researcher will show that historical evidence also supports the theory that the industrial revolution was initiated and even advanced by changes in community dynamics brought on by the spread of Calvinism among European citizenship.

Calvinism spread through Europe very rapidly. Before the Industrial Revolution began in Europe there were more Catholics than Protestants. As time passed, the protestant theological system began to be considered as an alternative to the conservative Christian life characterized by the blind submission of followers. It was also an alternative to superstitious beliefs and abuses that were prevalent during the dark ages.

¹⁰⁹ J. Matthew Pinson, ed., *Four Views on Eternal Security* (Grand Rapids.: Zondervan, 2002), 99.

Several European communities began to adopt new belief constructs. Calvinism is associated with various key figures such as Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, and Huldrych Zwingli. Each of those individuals helped to lead various communities to seek change from barbaric customs. The Christian branch bears the Calvin name because John Calvin was particularly influential in its formation.¹¹⁰ Calvinism for many communities represented change, ideology transformation, and a reformed church. As Calvinism revitalized individuals, it began to lay the groundwork for the later emergence and progress of capitalism in the European northern region. Historian scholars acknowledge that Calvinism gained momentum during the age of enlightenment that was characterized by reformations of European societies using reasoning power and scientific advancements rather than faith, revelation and tradition. Indeed, it is justifiable to argue that the industrial revolution was a product of Calvinism.¹¹¹

Calvinism is understood to have emerged from the community of Christians who had attained enlightenment. Calvinist communities embraced scientific advancements and intellectual interchange while opposing intolerance, superstition, and abuses by the state and the church. In the past, money lenders, as well as money-making activities, were hated. People who actively quested after money were thought to be on a path toward evil driven goals. Staunch religious believers never welcomed the practice of seeking money, even in cases where moneymaking and money-lending practices were necessary or legitimate. The pre-Industrial Revolution society believed that it was particularly difficult for the shopkeepers and other businesspersons to please and act in the ways of God. Acts

¹¹⁰ John McNeill, ed., *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion (The Library of Christian Classics)* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 53.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

of usury were considered extortionists, and the usurers were never allowed into the church. Usurers who forced themselves into the church would be denied sacraments, among other forms of religious recognition. Acceptance into the church was subject to practical tests oriented on the desire for money.¹¹² The moneymaking practices were not only considered as a contravention of religious teaching, but also as morally wrong.¹¹³ Communities that were embracing Calvinism were in direct opposition to a world where one was socially expected to be monetarily chaste, or be publically reviled for being economically driven.

Before Calvinism, the spirit of working was not embraced. Working hard was considered to be for the poor. The rich would seldom engage in physical work. The rich society led lives that included luxury and leisurely activities. The poor did not have many aspirations of improving their welfare. Before Calvinist communities began to grow, despite the fact that monks did concern themselves with everyday society, the Benedictine monasteries were considered the center stage of social, economic, and political life. The economic order revolved around the monasteries, as well as the parish.¹¹⁴ This is admirable in some ways, but economically it has problematic tones. Benedictine monks believed in living lives of high morals. This was a good goal for communities to aspire to. However, the monks also believed in living their lives in poverty. This lifestyle does not work for a community. A community in poverty cannot

¹¹² David Steele, Thomas Curtis and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five of Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2004), 34.

¹¹³ William Maxwell. *An Outlines of Worship: Its Development and Forms* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 345.

¹¹⁴ Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches and Purely Reforms: The Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 66.

help or sustain itself without the aid of someone with resources. So, if every community remains in poverty, there is no one to help those in need of resources.

Fortunately with the emergence of Calvinist driven communities, the idealized view of poverty took a different turn. Calvinism was the perspective that gave birth to capitalism. Calvinism comprised various elements that contradicted the views, as well as the condemnations against usury. As times changed, living conditions began to improve. The days of sleeping on old hay and houses with dirt floors were beginning to fade. Technology was bringing water into homes. Medicinal options reached past leach applications and herb mixes. Calvinist communities believed that the changing living conditions had rendered irrelevant some of the traditional views that asserted the desire for money was evil. The world was changing and it was best to change too. People began to be encouraged to look for money through profiting. Such money could be lent to the poor to improve their welfare. One of the inferences on the relationship between capitalism and Calvinism has often been based on the fact that capitalism came soon after protestant movements took effect. It is further reinforced that capitalism did not emerge as a coincidence of advancements between economic and religious developments, but because of logical progressions assumed by religious doctrines and economic perspectives.¹¹⁵ As communities grew in religious freedom, they also grew in economic ability. Communities that once used religion as the catalyst for living in poverty, were now beginning to use religion to help foster commercial prosperity.

¹¹⁵ Guenther H. Haas, *The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 334.

Of all the protestant ideas that began to crop up in European cities, Calvinism is considered the most pivotal in shaping the societies. The doctrine of predestination, when put into juxtaposition with the divine purpose that the catholic clergy emphasized, created a new concept for people to consider. People began to have a new argument. Is life already determined? Or, is life what I make of it? These two simple questions sparked a new perception of life for many people. Formerly, it was expected that one's son enter into the family business, regardless of what that business may be. People began to conclude that if life is what I make of it, then every individual has a right to find their own occupation. As a result, young people began to leave their country homes and farms. They came to cities. The old perception towards work had changed. The idea of a predetermined life was eroding. Work began to be viewed as an extension an individual's chosen identity and the goals they sought to achieve. This new concept of 'work' even caused conservative Christians to begin view work and associated incomes as blessing from God.

Before capitalism, employers would try to incentivize their laborers to spend as much time as possible working by offering higher wages. However, laborers would spend limited time being productive. The pre-Industrial Revolution worker had the view that they could earn the same amount even when they spent the rest of the time on leisure. The Lutheran doctrine places emphasis on the believers to embrace their sinfulness account while relying on the grace of God, the Calvinism laid emphasis on the conduct that would increase the grace of God. The Lutheran doctrine asserted that God helps those who have faith in him while the Calvinism taught that God is helpful to those who help themselves. The Catholics viewed the credit of man as cumulative of his actions

while the Calvinist perceived the work as the subject of great concern. The Calvinist view perceived God as a supernatural being that demanded human beings to live by doing what is considered constructive. This resulted in a methodical perspective, an assertion that laziness may lead one to the path of sinning. The Calvinist explained that those who did not work hard could hardly sustain themselves, and could even resort to stealing.¹¹⁶ This made it much easier for employers to get productivity out of their laborers. People may not be bothered by cheating their boss, but they would be much more apprehensive about sinning against their God. Being productive became a responsibility to each individual. Laziness was not just wasteful of time, it was a sin against God.

Demographics began to shift. Towns with people who were striving towards capitalism grew. It is argued that populations that consisted of well-developed capitalist societies were those dominated by a protestant populous. Max Weber attempted to find an answer to this relationship. His research focused on comparing communities by their known religious affiliation. Through his research it became clear that the number of rich protestant populations in pre-Industrial Revolution Europe was higher than the catholic population.¹¹⁷ At that time Europe was still primarily Catholic.

The majority of European communities, Catholic in their beliefs, considered wealth as detrimental to the service of the clergy. Calvinist were a smaller group, but they were growing steadily. They considered wealth as an element that could strengthen the service of the clergy, as well as the prestige. Christians were urged to desist from being lazy and wasting time. They were urged to work hard and capitalize on every opportunity

¹¹⁶ Benedict, *Christ's Churches and Purely Reforms*, 134.

¹¹⁷ Steele, *The Five of Points of Calvinism*, 23.

that presented itself. In the end, poverty was viewed as undesirable and contravention to the glory of God. Besides, the art of making profit became a justified ethic of the Calvinist society.¹¹⁸ Calvinist evangelists utilized the biblical story of Job and the talented servants to justify their materialism doctrine. The accumulation of material wealth was encouraged. The doctrine discouraged society from spending too much time on leisure and relaxation purposes. It was asserted that wealth was only to serve the glory of God. A combination of these points ensured that even as people worked hard, they served as much as possible.¹¹⁹ Alternatively, the limitations imposed on the expenditure only ensured that people gathered capital for further investment opportunities. For example, shrewdness, which was dominated by a Calvinist population, was characterized by increased simplicity in the religious circles. This feature, combining with the urge to work hard, resulted in the substantial accumulation of wealth. Evangelists of the Industrial Revolution were the first prosperity ministry. To prosper in God was not only good, it was to be expected. This was a very popular message. It resonated with a populous that had been impoverished for many generations. Further showing how Calvinism inspired a new community of workers that began to fill the markets, stores, and factories Europe.

After creating many capitalist converts, communities found themselves poised to tackle the issue of distribution of wealth.¹²⁰ Calvinism came with the view that physical work was a calling from God, and that all human beings were created to work. The

¹¹⁸ John McNeill, *The Characters and History of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 34.

¹¹⁹ Ford Lewis Battles, John Walchenbach, *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1980), 103.

¹²⁰ Haas, *The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics*, 117

protestant work ethic promised to improve the living conditions of those who embraced it. Many Christians were convinced by the doctrine, setting the stage for industrial revolution.¹²¹ Industrialism was embraced by most of the Calvinist dominated communities. As these new communities grew rich, they started to drift from their religious roots. Following the rebirth of Protestantism, the orientations of the economy were changed by finance and mercantilism. The economy ceased to be community-oriented, welcoming the capitalism and nationalist approaches. Calvin was always at the center of such reforms. Calvinism initiated mechanistic approaches to the world order, resulting in industrial revolution.¹²² Communities that embraced capitalism gave birth to industrial revolution. However, they also gave birth to a new form of individualism. Communities were becoming comprised of self-driven and self-motivated people. This is excellent for the work place, but it creates a community that does not put a strong emphasis on one's relationship to others. Working to get out of poverty was good, but one had a duty to make sure that opportunities to do so did not end with them. Wealth can be enjoyed when opportunity is given to all. The new and emerging industrialized community had to learn this lesson.

In this regard, Calvinism can be considered as a primary approach that fueled the Industrialization Revolution in various ways. In one way, it fostered the view that working to gain profits was not evil. Thus, communities began to accept moneymaking practices and even ventured into it themselves. As they ventured in the moneymaking practice, Calvinism restricted them from spending the money on leisure and relaxation

¹²¹ Battles, *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 34

¹²² Lyle Lange. *God Loved the Worlds: A Study of Doctrine*. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2006), 67.

activities. This was a deliberate step to ensure that the society saved as much as possible for their daily economic activities. It may be argued that those who heeded and saved enough became better placed to make large and promising investments such as factories. The Industrial Revolution was further strengthened by a Calvinist community that viewed physical work as acceptable, and that every person was required to work hard. These new communities began to effect the overall populous and shift societal norms. People began to embrace hard work. Most people resorted to seeking employment, even offering to work as laborers in the established factories. Sons and daughters migrated from their family homes in rural Europe in search of their own destiny amongst the sprawling city streets. The smoke that billowed from the newly formed factories of Europe signaled hope and change. Hope for a new community seeking a way to break the socioeconomic patterns of poverty in their family. Change, into a life of own their choosing.

Britain

Next, we will dissect the ways Calvinism affected British communities. In the mid-sixteen hundreds there were some religious factions in England who believed the worship style of England's Calvinistic churches were too similar to Germany's Lutheran churches. It was this group's belief that worship should be practiced in a completely pure fashion. It was due to that belief that they began to be referred to as Puritans. Puritans was originally a pejorative term.¹²³ Puritans beckoned for their church to adopt certain Reformed Calvinistic practices. Calvinism affected this English community of Puritans in several ways. They disapproved of wearing wedding rings, provocative clothing, and kneeling at communion.

¹²³ Robin Keeley, 1st ed. *Eerdmans' Handbook to Christian Belief*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1982), 444.

Puritans enjoyed a period of political success in England. During 1640-1660, they rose to have political power and influence. Ministry had effectively changed them and as a result they sought to change their community. Puritans at one point had so many political officials they exercised political control over the British Isles. They challenged the Anglican establishment. Parliament passed an ordinance in favor of new Presbyterian church order.¹²⁴ This meant religion would not be required to have uniformity. The Church of England could no longer usurp authority over all the churches in England. Other denominations could now seek out their own practices of worship freely.

As the first decade of the seventeenth century came, Puritanism would be the engine for a sweeping move of dissent that would lead to the English Civil War and the death of King Charles I.¹²⁵ This shows that sometimes the influence of ministry changes not only people, but government as well.

Colonial America

To conclude our historical observations, the researcher will analyze the reawakened Colonial American community. This will be done by showing how Jonathan Edwards successfully utilized Calvinism to incite participation in what is historically classified as the Great Awakening. Time has not changed Calvinism. Its five points are still intact. The same concepts used to revolutionize Europe and purify England have not faded. Yet, Colonial American communities use Calvinism as a catalyst for something

¹²⁴ Daniel G. Reid, Robert Linder, Bruce Shelley, Harry Stout, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 964.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 965-966.

completely different. By this time in history, the concept of Calvinism is almost two hundred years old. It has journeyed far from its origins in 1530's Geneva.

When Jonathan Edwards is born in 1703AD., there existed something that was nonexistent in Calvin's day, the British colonies located on American soil. This by no means diminishes the effects of Calvinism on Edward's ministry context. Many years before Edward's was born the rapid spread of Calvinism had stretched throughout England. In the 1620's Puritans began to arrive in the American colonies.¹²⁶ In an effort to get away from the influences of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and the Church of England some Puritans came to the New England colonies in droves of thousands. The infancy of these colonies were viewed as an opportunity to break from the years of tradition England held. Though almost a century had passed, Calvinism survived a trip Atlantic Ocean and ventured into the New World of America. It was imported from Europe and shipped from England.

Colonial America was still under British rule. The British territories spanned from the southern shores of the Caribbean Islands, to the northern coast of New England. Originally, growth of the colonies was stagnate. In 1660 the total population of the colonies was only a third of the population of London. However, by 1710 the colonial population had grown to almost one million inhabitants. Most towns were not very large. Each town usually consisted of a court house, store, meeting house, lawyer's office, doctor's office, craftsmen's shops, and a church.¹²⁷ It was more culturally acceptable to have a town without meeting house, than it was to have a town without its own church.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 444.

¹²⁷ Robert Olwell and Alan Tully, eds., *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 1-4, 172.

Edwards was born into a society where one's identity was often directly tied to one's church affiliation.

Edwards' childhood prepared him to do great work. His father Timothy was revered as a masterful preacher. As a result of his father being in ministry, he grew up with early fascinations of ministry work. At the age of nine, Edwards had a conversional experience while at his father's church. He would later refer to that experience as, "a time of remarkable awakening."¹²⁸ This term that would later be used to describe his ministry movement and revival.

As a child Edwards would meet five times a day for prayer. Other boys began to join him and they created a secret place of prayer in a nearby swamp. As he matured the fervency of those daily prayer meetings began to wane and his piousness for ministry dulled. Edwards described his return to worldly inclinations by saying, "I returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin."¹²⁹ The calling he once felt had wavered.

Edwards attended Yale for his pastoral training. Yet, even then he was not fully convinced of his own salvation. Edwards struggle with to concept of humankind's conversion as it relates to God's sovereignty. If God had complete sovereign authority over all his creation, then one must conclude the fate of humanity is in God's control also.¹³⁰ He debated between two differing notions. Is salvation something I chose for me through my love of God? Or, is salvation something God chose for me through a love for

¹²⁸ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 13.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 43-56.

me? Calvin believed in Biblical scripture as the only rule of faith, of the bondage of human free will through sin, and justification by grace through faith. Calvinism's distinct difference from Lutheranism hinges on its more radical use of scripture as a criterion of ecclesiastical doctrine and practice.¹³¹ Edward's understanding of this concept helped him find his place in the church as well as his community.

After reading I Timothy 1:17, he felt an overwhelming joy. He felt the majesty and the meekness of God. He'd stepped into a new world of spiritual delight.¹³² Edwards left seminary with a Calvinistic approach to ministry and community.

In 1729 Edwards went to pastor the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts. He grew alarmed by the spiritual complacency of his congregation. He perceived them to be lacking the piety that caused a stirring from the soul.¹³³ He devised a plan to present God in a new and open way. The idea was to preach sermons that would inspire the community to give more of themselves to God in worship.

Edwards felt convicted by his Calvinist understanding of the shared affects of ministry and community. John Calvin remarked, "We must observe that the knowledge of God which we are invited to cultivate is not that which, resting satisfied with empty speculation, only flutters in the brain, but a knowledge which will prove substantial and fruitful whenever it is duly perceived and rooted in the heart."¹³⁴ It is not only the knowledge of God, but the pursuit after God that drives man to deeper understandings. Accordingly, Edwards decided he would begin to hold a series of revivals.

¹³¹ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 268.

¹³² Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 15.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁴ Keeley, *Eerdman's Handbook to Christian Belief*, 130.

These revival services began to be held for the purpose of instilling a new sense of piety and sincerity in the worship of God. The popularity of such gatherings began to spread rapidly. The movement was now bigger than any one parish or state. However, the “great awakening” was not happening in all the American colonies. The movement was taken place sporadically across the nation. While New York could show little signs of excitement towards a revival of Spirit, Massachusetts and Connecticut drew huge crowds seeking a new birth.¹³⁵ The ministerial movement did not resonate with every community it reached.

Many of the great revivalists of the Great Awakening considered themselves Calvinist. This meant that the colonial revivals held roots and traditions in the English and Scottish Protestant churches. They believed, like John Calvin, that the gospel must be preached to all people because the visible church could not distinguish between saint and sinner.¹³⁶ The church could not guarantee salvation to anyone, but it was still believed to be the only route to grace. It was viewed by Edwards and other Great Awakening preachers as their ministerial imperative to bring the Gospel to everyone.

Revival services of the Great Awakening movement began to be known for its propensity of praising God in a demonstrative way. This was very unusual for some and a break from the normality of quiet worship. Those that disagreed with the message and worship style of the Awakening described these services in an unflattering manner.

¹³⁵ Frank Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 21.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

Opponents such as Timothy Cutler portrayed the attendants of those revivals as, "... hideous yelling, and shameful revels, continuing... till break of day."¹³⁷

Contrary to popular belief, Puritanism was not the only religion that came with the colonial settlers of New England. It was however the most prevalent.¹³⁸ New England Puritans played an important role in giving Calvinism an evangelical facet. Puritans were undergoing a theological debate over the nature and timing of conversion. Some thought the New Birth occurred when the Holy Spirit entered an individual's heart, and that true converts could state the exact moment of their change. This allowed for easy distinctions between the saved and unsaved in the Church of England.¹³⁹ This caused some to believe spiritual change that was apparent through visible evidence. In some communities this was interpreted as living a life that can be seen as Holy. In Edward's community this outward evidence was understood to be a display of verbal or physical change. This change would bring the onset of yelling, screaming, running, jumping and several other unconstrained actions in worship.

Not all preachers subscribed to the beliefs of an Awakening Church. Charles Chauncy, of Boston Massachusetts, tried revivalism and found that either he was not effective at it, or did not believe in it. As a result he began to defend reasonable religion. This led to a confrontation between Chauncy and Edwards. Awakeners spoke against unconverted ministries and half-converted sinners. In some instances they invaded settled parishes. They railed against the intellectualism (Harvard and Yale) and sterility of

¹³⁷ Reid, *Dictionary of Christianity*, 954.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹³⁹ David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2006), 61.

spiritual life.¹⁴⁰ It was Edwards' belief that ministry and worship was suppose to be organic. If one was not careful tradition would kill spirit.

Thanks to the Great Awakening the religious landscape of America began to change and yield new ministries. It became a battering ram. In England Calvinism helped create a country where the Church of England did not rule over all churches. In similar fashion Calvinism under the drive of the Greta Awakening was assisting the rise of new denominations such as Baptist, Methodist, and Churches of Christ.¹⁴¹

This new and unrestrained freedom people felt in worship eventually began to change other aspects of their life. These new followers and converts had tasted freedom in God and worship. Now they began to long for freedom in other arenas of their life.

The Great Awakening re-invented various community's concept of history and destiny. There was a rise in acceptance of the meaning of 'post-millennialism.' This is the belief that the golden age of the kingdom of God would occur before the return of Jesus. Edwards wrote that America had an opportunity to be the New World and usher in that golden age. This was a radical change from how many New England Protestants understood the course of current events.¹⁴² A heavenly reward was not a celestial goal that was purely obtainable in the afterlife. God's children were meant for greatness and for liberty. The language of liberty began to be intertwined with those who had been 'awakened.' Believers thought they would see God's kingdom personified on earth. One mode of bringing this to fruition was through exercising liberty.

¹⁴⁰ Martin E. Marty, *Religion, Awakening and Revolution* (Wilmington: Consortium, 1977), 91.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁴² Adrian Hastings, *A World History of Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1999), 425.

The ministerial message of the Great Awakening was controversial in the north, but in the southern colonies it would kindle revolution. For southern colonists the Calvinistic message that Edwards presented had the potential to create a moral and spiritual dilemma. The idea of spiritual freedom for all would ultimately lay the groundwork for a belief in physical freedom for all. Considering many farmers and piedmont inhabitants owned slaves, the schism between north and south ideals had begun years before the American Revolution and Civil War.¹⁴³ Ministry that is active in community is one that will seek after social justice. Often that means that ministry will be at odds with a political establishment.

The term 'Great Awakening' made its debut in 1842. Joseph Tracey used it as the title of his book on the rise in popularity of religious interest in the colonial period.¹⁴⁴ Yet, history has shown us that the revivals of Edwards and others had greater reverberations than those found inside church walls. The Great Awakening brought to its community a large increase in church membership. It also helped with humanitarian ventures, fostered the opening of colleges, and developed a more democratic society.¹⁴⁵ Edwards used Calvinism to shift church and community. He was able to take an old theological concept and inject it into his newly formed colonial community. These actions fostered a unique cultural identity that grew from an already existing religious movement.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 423-424.

¹⁴⁴ *The Encyclopedia of American Religious History*. 1st ed. (1996), s.v. "The Great Awakening."

¹⁴⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 1st ed. (1967) s.v. "The Great Awakening" The college of New Jersey, Dartmouth, and Princeton are some of the colleges that came out of the Great Awakening.

Every new community influenced by Calvinism, developed a unique personality. Ministry and community are symbiotic. Ministry forms and shapes the community it is in. Congruently, the needs of a community effect the direction of a ministry. Concepts are interpreted, internalized, and initiated differently. Those differences are often swayed by the community the concept seeks to effect. This translates into one single message of ministry having varying effects on community. Europeans heard Calvin's message and it industrialized them. England heard the same concept and it purified them. Americans, such as Edwards heard the same message and it awakened him. When ministry is allowed to be relevant to its community, it becomes unique and addresses the needs of its community.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this project is to establish a model for churches with satellite campuses that allows each church site to flourish with its own uniqueness, while simultaneously maintaining a strong connection with its other church locations. This research acknowledges there are several ways to go about the task of doing satellite campus ministry. The organizational structures being observed for research purposes are those of the Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church - West and Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. The church satellite movement should be more than an example of fast food chains given a spiritual twist. Satellite campuses have the possibility of possessing distinctly different congregational focuses, and a shared ministerial direction. Therefore, a model for embracing uniqueness without severing commonalities is essential.

This project will be strengthened through the presentation of detailed research. Research can be understood through a four part definition.¹ First, research is a systematic search. A researcher must develop and implement a concise concept that can be used in a logical system. Doing research is often difficult and can exhaust time and energy. Secondly, research must involve adequate information. Research recognizes a problem

¹ Nancy J. Vyhmeister, *Quality: Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 1.

and looks for answers. Any information that is presented from be from authoritative resources, address the problem, and be properly documented. Thirdly, research consist of objective knowledge. Objective knowledge is achieved by having prior knowledge of the topic. The researcher takes this prior knowledge and adds facts, while concisely omitting possibilities and suppositions. Research must be guided by logical and not by emotions. Research grounds itself in facts, not in ideas or conjectures. Finally, research focuses on a singular topic. It is not feasible to try to research broad subjects. Research papers are not meant to be encyclopedias. A definitive problem is the only one that can be solved.

This research addresses a specific problem. Lewis Chapel – West, a satellite campus, was failing to grow. In the span of two years, the church had garnered no new members. Average Sunday morning attendance regularly hovered in the single digit number range. This research will advance the hypothesis that when a church is actively involved in its community, and attentive to its congregational needs, it will naturally develop an identity. This identity will not completely resemble churches in other areas because those churches will reflect their communities and congregational needs. This should be the natural symbiotic relationship between a church and its community. Thusly, even satellite campus churches should be more reflective of the communities they serve than the satellite family they belong to.

This hypothesis begins with the premise that churches in a satellite campus structure do not have to share the same methodology, but they must have the same theology and missiology. Sharing the same theology ensures that each site location is learning about the same God. Satellite locations share an understanding of who they are in relation to who God is. This ensures that traveling from one church site to the next will

not hinder any spiritual growth in congregants. Each satellite campus must also share the same missiology. Church locations should all have the same focus of saving souls for Christ and developing disciples. Once each satellite location has a mutual understanding of theological focus and missional goals, the method of achieving those things should become flexible. The reason methodology should be flexible is because what is effective in one place may not be effective in another. So, a satellite campus' methodology must be fluid. This gives each satellite location the ability to make adjustments in order to find the most effect way of doing ministry in its respective community.

The researcher selected two groups of people. One group was comprised of congregants from Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church – West. The other group was comprised of congregants from Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. Each group contained people who were very familiar with the ministry at the location they regularly attended. Inversely, they were much less familiar with the composition of the other satellite location. Applying the use of qualitative research method, each individual will be exposed to six sermons given to each congregation that sought to address specific issues that were prevalent in that location's community. Each Sunday morning for the span of the project each group member is asked to attend worship at both satellite campuses. At 8:30am, they will attend Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. Then, they will attend worship at 11:00am at Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church – West. This will ensure two things. One, project participants will get to engage both congregations. Secondly, they will be exposed to the same sermon deliverer.

This project is designed to show that strength can be found in embracing difference. It further acknowledges that the concept of 'different' does not have to be

equivalent to 'deficient.' Both congregational groups had seven people. The control population consisted of church members ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. The researcher ensured that ages were mirrored in both groups.

A pre-survey² will be given to each individual prior to beginning the project. The pre-survey is designed to assess the impression each individual has of both congregations. Keeping in mind, they are only familiar with one. The project will conclude with a post-survey. The post-survey will contain the same questions asked in the pre-survey. The researcher hypothesizes that after being exposed to preaching and given the opportunity to fellowship with the congregations at both church satellite locations, participants will see the value of having connected churches that function differently.

This research uses the qualitative method. Qualitative studies, due to the inductive, evolving methodological constructs, inquirers may define few terms in a project. Qualitative research plans allow the writer to advance 'tentative' definitions. Accordingly, in a qualitative case study, themes emerge through the data analysis.³

² Appendix H, Pre-Survey/Post-Survey Questionnaire.

³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 144.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Lewis Chapel Church is a multi-site church family. The church is located in two neighboring counties. Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Fayetteville, NC is one hundred one years old. Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church – West in Raeford, NC is four years old. The Lewis Chapel (in Fayetteville) has one of the largest African-American congregations in the city. Lewis Chapel – West is located in a rapidly growing community, yet they averaged less than seven people in attendance per-Sunday. Despite being the satellite campus of a very well established church and being in the midst of vast neighborhood growth, Lewis Chapel – West was almost none existent in its community.

The researcher observed upon his arrival at both churches that the two followed the same order of worship on Sunday mornings were identical at both locations. The sermons preached at both sites had usually been the same. The method of conducting Bible Study during the week was identical at both locations. The efforts and methods to engage the community were identical in both places. Lewis Chapel – West, a small church, trying to conduct itself like the mega church, Lewis Chapel, was an ineffective approach. A new church attempting to engage its community like a well established church was unproductive. This researcher contends that Lewis Chapel – West was suffering from an identity problem. It was an ineffective strategy to attempt to be a duplication of another church. Accordingly, a new plan was introduced to produce

ministerial effectiveness at Lewis Chapel - West, even if it meant breaking away from the previously prescribe Lewis Chapel formula. Therefore, this research will examine a model designed to show that a satellite campus is most effective when it is allowed to pursue its own unique identity.

Collection of Data

To further the purpose of this research, persons were selected from each Lewis Chapel congregation. Individuals were selected based on their knowledge and involvement in their respective church locations. Eight people were chosen from both congregation sites. It was imperative that participants were only familiar with the site they regularly attended. This would allow the researcher the opportunity to observe what impressions each church gives to those who are not actively involved in it. It was also important that these groups reflect an array of perspectives. Accordingly, people from various age ranges were selected. The researcher also made sure that each congregational focus group had the same number of teenagers, young adults, and senior adults. This was done so that results would not be skewed by relying too heavily on one age group. Participants were not informed of the overall purpose of the project. They were simply asked to participate in a congregational survey. In order to complete the surveys they were required to attend Sunday morning worship service at both Lewis Chapel locations. Specifically, they had to attend Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church at 8:30am. Following that service they would attend 11:00am worship at Lewis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church – West.

The project lasted for six weeks. Each participant was given a pre-survey before they attended worship at both locations. This allowed the researcher to observe how

participants identified the church they were active in, while also showing the uninformed impression they had of the other church location. At the conclusion of the six weeks, each congregational focus group was given a post-survey. The questions on the pre and post survey were the same. Utilizing this method the researcher was able to illustrate the commonalities and differences between the two churches.

First Sermon

The first sermon was preached on October 7, 2012. There was an article in the local newspaper, *The Fayetteville Observer*, concerning the close of a local center.¹ The close of this center would have an effect on the Lewis Chapel church community in Fayetteville. The center was designed to help nonviolent offenders assimilate back into society. Unfortunately, our society makes it difficult for people who have become involved in the court systems to move past their prior mistakes. The researcher preached a sermon entitled, “How Much is Enough?” Using Matthew 6:33 as the reference text. This sermon was geared towards challenging people to look past their own affluence, and recognize there are people in our communities that need help.

The researcher also referenced Art Simon in his sermon. Simon wrote a book *How Much is Enough: Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture*.² Simon believes that if purpose is reflected for us by the life of Jesus then we can be no more fulfilling than when we are drawing near to God. The sermon called for individuals to take a sober look at themselves, their church, and their community. Lewis Chapel is fortunate enough to

¹ Gregory Phillips, “Center for Nonviolent Offenders Set to Close,” *Fayetteville Observer*, October 5, 2012.

² Arthur Simon, *How Much Is Enough? Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003).

have membership comprised of financially successful people. The question then becomes, “Can I turn my back on my neighbors who have so little, when God has blessed me with so much?” We must work until everyone has a equal chance at advancement and improvement.

Second Sermon

The second sermon was preached at Lewis Chapel – West on October 14, 2012. This sermon came in response to a new development in the church’s community. The newspaper reported that Hoke County, the county in which Lewis Chapel – West is located, would be having a ground breaking ceremony for Habitat for Humanity.³ Houses are being built frequently in the researcher’s community. The start of Habitat for Humanity meant that the poor weren’t being overlooked.

The researcher felt it was important to express to congregants the need for support of the new Habitat program. These homes were needed, but they would not simply build themselves. Becoming involved in this venture would be a great way to ensure Lewis Chapel - West was positively affecting the community.

The sermon preached was called, “There’s No place Like Home.” The reference text was I Samuel 16:1-3. In that scripture the reader is told that God admonished Samuel to move past his grieving stage. Samuel grieved because God had taken his hand away from Saul. Samuel needed to stop grieving because it was time to start working. There is a time to grieve to grieve the woes of one’s community. However, the church cannot stay in stage of grief. It must move to a place of action. Lewis Chapel – West was given a call

³ Chick Jacobs, “Raeford/Hoke Habitat for Humanity Groundbreaking Ceremony,” *Fayetteville Observer*, October 11, 2012.

to action for and in its community. They congregation was told to take action, even when it must be done sacrificially.

Sermon Three

On the Sunday morning of October 21, 2012; the researcher preached a sermon on a lesson that spoke to an issue causing local unrest. Several African-American individuals were claiming they were victims of a racial injustice. Three men fought from death row. They claimed that prosecutor Margaret Russ intentionally dismissed people of color from juries involving their cases in order to give them a disadvantage based on their race.⁴ People in the community around Lewis Chapel began to take sides. However, the church remained silent.

So, that morning the researcher preached from the title, "Caught Red Handed." His scripture was John 3:1-7. The scripture tells the story of a person of privilege named Nicodemus. The preacher reminded Lewis Chapel that God puts us in places of power to have a positive influence on others. It is sad when someone uses their authority to take advantage over those who are not as well connected. The researcher also used the sermon moment to remind the congregation that like Nicodemus, at times we try to operate in the dark. However, whatever is done in the dark, it will eventually be brought to the light. The researcher asked, "What will we be caught doing?" The church was reminded that status does not give us a right to abuse others. They were challenged to reject being stubborn like Nicodemus. Jesus is an equal opportunity savior. Since Christians are heavenly ambassadors. It is part of the Christian mandate to treat one another with love. This love is not based on gender, race, age, or socio-economic status. Even when our neighbors cannot see our actions, God always does.

⁴ Paul Woolverton, "Racial Injustice," *Fayetteville Observer*, October 19, 2012.

Fourth Sermon

The fourth sermon was preached at Lewis Chapel. There was a sad incident that left a young woman the victim of sexual assault.⁵ Unfortunately, that event in itself is not what made this news so alarming. The element of that story that alarmed the researcher the most is that the community didn't seem to care. This tragic event happened in a poor area. This was not a place thought to be a "safe neighborhoods," so many took this event as a normal occurrence.

This sermon was preached on October 28, 2012. Using the scripture found at Luke 19:32-40, the researcher preach the title, "But Wait, There's More." In this message the researcher addressed what people expect from their daily lives. The researcher explored how our level of expectation is often set low. As a result of low expectations Christian often squander blessings, simply because they were not ready to receive them. Certain places become safe. Other place become dangerous. Certain churches become full of rich people. Others are looked upon in a myriad of other ways. Classifications often embody our expectations. As Christian we are to be ready. Ready for whatever a new day may bring.

As Jesus approached the city he beheld it and wept. The city was full of corruption, vulgarity, and hate. Yet, Jesus still went into Jerusalem. No community is passed the ability to be saved or redeemed. The triumph of the portion of scripture that was preached is found in Christ ability to come into our mess. Christ does not shun people because their neighborhood is not the nicest. When injustice happens, it does not matter what the neighborhood is like. It matters that it happened to one of God's beloved children.

⁵ Caitlin Dineen, "Woman Reports Sexual Assault," *Fayetteville Observer*, October 23, 2012.

Fifth Sermon

The fifth sermon focused on Jesus' parable of the farmer. This sermon was preached at Lewis Chapel – West on October 28, 2012. The farmer parable is found in Matthew 13:3-9. The sermon title is, “The Good Farmer” Jesus tells the story in an effort to express the importance of people receiving the good news of the Gospel. The farmer sows good seeds across the ground. The farmer does this, even though the all the ground receiving seed is not the ideal soil.

The researcher raised a question. If Jesus is the good sower, then why does he waste good seed in on bad soil? The research argued that Jesus does this because of the laws of reaping and sowing. The laws of reaping and sowing state that an individual collects what they have planted. Therefore, Jesus puts good into what appears tainted because his goodness will cultivate our sinfulness.

The news recently reported on gang activity in Lewis Chapel – West community. A new type of crime had made its way to the rural area of Hoke County.⁶ Lewis Chapel – West was challenged to see more in people than their bad soil. They were asked to see the possibilities for greatness in others that God sees. At one time we were all tainted soil, but Jesus looked beyond they quality we had, to see within us the quality we can achieve.

Sixth Sermon

The sixth sermon was preached on November 4, 2012 at Lewis Chapel - West. For several years the community of Hoke County worked towards getting a hospital. Currently, the closest hospital for Hoke residents was located in the heart of Fayetteville, its neighboring county. However, construction crews had recently began to work

⁶ Deuce Niven, “Six People Sought for Multiple Crimes,” *Fayetteville Observer*, October 22, 2012.

feverously on building a new hospital for Hoke. This was an answer to many people's prayer.⁷

The researcher seized this new development as an opportunity to preach the title, "Just a Reminder." The text was Romans 5:6-8. Coincidentally, the new hospital was being built a mere mile from Lewis Chapel – West. The sermon was used to remind congregants that there was more than one hospital under construction in their community. They were told that Lewis Chapel – West was also a hospital. The church is not a place for the perfect. It is a place of healing for the sick. The church is a place of recovery for the afflicted. The church was admonished not to become a place where people are hurting, but too embarrassed to seek help.

Survey Overview

The pre and post survey concerned itself with observing three primary areas. First, it measured theological focus of the two church sites. This would allow the researcher to examine the similarities and differences that each congregation approached the concept of God. This would also show if the biblical teachings were congruent. Secondly, the surveys would show the focus of the church's mission efforts. Thirdly, the survey would help illuminate the methodology of both churches.

The surveys consisted of twenty-five questions. Each question in the survey was designed to bring clarity to the three focus areas. Questions five, seven, ten, eleven, thirteen, nineteen, and twenty-two were all theologically geared questions. Questions one, two, three, four, nine, twelve, fifteen, and twenty were all directed toward missiology. Questions six, eight, fourteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, twenty-one, twenty-three, twenty-four, and twenty-five were all methodological based.

⁷ Gregory Phillips, "Hospital Takes Shape," *Fayetteville Observer*, October 30, 2012.

The researcher will give results based on his findings. To understand these results, keep this in mind. When refereeing to the two focus groups, the results concern what each group observed at the church they were least familiar with. This means, the Lewis Chapel focus group results will refer to what they observed while at Lewis Chapel – West. Accordingly, the Lewis Chapel – West focus group results will refer to their observations regarding Lewis Chapel. Both of these groups are answering about the unfamiliar, which means they are answering unbiased.

Examining the pre-survey from both focus groups revealed something interesting. The focus group from Lewis Chapel had a higher expectation of similarities between the two congregations than the focus group from Lewis Chapel – West. 15% of Lewis Chapel participants expected to Lewis Chapel – West be different from the church they were familiar with. Reversely, 40% of Lewis Chapel – West participants showed through their pre-survey comparison they expect the other church to have differing practices.

The pre-survey results showed that both groups overwhelmingly believed that the theology of both churches was the same. The post-survey yielded a 100% agreement, a combination of strongly agree and agree, that both churches follow the same theology. The Lewis Chapel post survey resulted in 91% strongly agreeing in areas of theological concern. Lewis Chapel – West participants answered in the strongly agree category concerning theological concepts by 93%.

Missional questions yielded similar finding to their theological counterparts. 84% of all participants answers regarding mission were in the agreeable category. The post-survey confirmed that both church sites shared a common mission to help their communities.

The first methodology question showed an array of answers in pre and post survey. The question ask, “The same group of people does most of the ministry work around the church?” Keep in mind that Lewis Chapel has four thousand members. Lewis Chapel – West has one hundred. The pre-test for Lewis Chapel focus group concerning Lewis Chapel – West showed that 62.5% agreed with the question. Only 12.5% those asked from Lewis Chapel – West answered in the agreeable for Lewis Chapel’s congregation. The post-survey showed a change. Now from Lewis Chapel 50% answered in the agreeable, and Lewis Chapel – West remained at 12.5%.

Both focus groups answered overwhelmingly that they agree with question thirteen, “The Bible is taught to be the inerrant Word of God.” However, the groups did not agree on how this belief was carried out. Question eight poses, “One translation of the Bible is often viewed with more reverence than other translations.” Post surveys showed that the Lewis Chapel focus group agreed 75% agreed, but an observation of Lewis Chapel – West yielded an 87.5% disagree result. This researcher notes that at Lewis Chapel the King James version of the bible is very revered.

Question fourteen ask, “This church has programs in place to help new converts adjust to their new life as a Christian.” Both focus groups agreed that the mission to win souls for Christ was important, based on their answers given in question nine. Lewis Chapel related post survey results disagreed by 62% with question fourteen. Lewis Chapel – West based results showed a no disagreement.

80% of Lewis Chapel – West oriented post survey results that they thought fellowship was integral to the churches approach to ministry. Lewis Chapel based answered in the 59% agreeable realm. These percentages are based on answers given to

question sixteen, which is, “This church has a program in place to help new converts adjust to their new life as a Christian.”

Question eighteen, “Ones age commonly determines what class I go to for Biblical learning purposes.” Post survey result from the Lewis Chapel group showed that 50% agreed while Lewis Chapel – West had 62% disagreement. This researcher notes that both campuses have multiple classes that they offer. Commonly age is a factor in deciding where to go, but Lewis Chapel – West offers classes based on teaching style. This allows people a chance to choose a class based on learning style.

Question twenty-one says, “Congregants are regularly encouraged to engage one another in a cordial way, especially those they have yet to meet.” Post survey showed that Lewis Chapel – West focus group 12% disagree and Lewis Chapel with a 50%.

Question twenty-three says, “This church commonly engages its community outside of traditional church settings.” Lewis Chapel results found answered this in 87% agreement, but Lewis Chapel – West’s group found 60% agreement. The researcher notes space is not as available for Lewis Chapel – West. Being in a smaller space necessitates a creative approach to doing ministry outside of the building. However, Lewis Chapel is spacious and can accommodate a multitude of programs on their campus.

Question twenty-four says, “This congregation prefers something consistent/steady as oppose to something uncommon/changing” Lewis Chapel – West focus group answered 60% in the disagreement realm, but the Lewis Chapel focus group landed in the 12% disagree range. This researcher notes that it is common for Sunday morning worships at Lewis Chapel – West to have no church bulletin. The order of

worship at Lewis Chapel has to be time conscientious because there are three services that have to take place on Sunday mornings.

Question twenty-five says, “We often incorporate eating into our programs.” 25% of the Lewis Chapel – West focus group answered in the post survey that they agree. They did not think Lewis Chapel regularly incorporated meals into their programs. However, the post survey showed 87% of the Lewis Chapel focus group felt Lewis Chapel – West frequently ate at their gatherings.

The only methodological based question that remained similar in both pre and post surveys was question seventeen. This question was, “Preaching often involves political and social issues from the community?” This question was answered in the affirmative by both focus groups. The researcher concludes that although this is a methodological based question, the sermons were provided by the same person. As a result, both groups were exposed to the same sermon style and delivery.

The largest spike in agreement and disagreement were in method based questions. The post and pre survey showed that in spite of focus group participants observing massive theological similarities and sweeping mission directives at both church locations; the method of carrying those acts out were very different.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

This research has been effective on two fronts. First, it has academic value. There are very few scholastic resources discussing the resurgent phenomenon of multi-site church ministry. Information on this subject is vital to building a pool of resources for others to glean from. This enables the opportunity for vocational training to be done in a growing field. Secondly, this research can be applied by other satellite campus churches in a very pragmatic way. This research was not develop with only Lewis Chapel – West in mind. It was done to create a model for other churches to follow who seek to develop a church site that is separate from their parent church body, but wish to remain loyal to the connection they share with the other church location(s).

After observing the research, it was concluded that multi-site churches can in fact successfully embrace local driven uniqueness without severing cross-congregational commonalities. This research has established a model for churches with satellite campuses. This model allows each church site to flourish with its own uniqueness, while simultaneously maintaining a strong connection with its other church locations. Each satellite campus has the possibility of possessing distinctly different congregational focuses, and a shared ministerial direction.

Any multi-site church that intentionally engages their community, and effectively ministers to the needs of their congregation, will ultimately have an identity bred specifically out of those endeavors. To impede this process would be to work against a church shaping movement that occurs naturally.

In conclusion, the research observations between Lewis Chapel and Lewis Chapel – West shows the positive nature of satellite churches that embrace both their commonalities and differences. This is supported theologically by many factors including the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is one God in three spirits. Each spirit has its own unique function, yet they operate of the same God nature. Their differences do not make them weaker, they make them stronger. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit work in harmony together. Such is the case for multi-site churches. They do not have to function in an identical manner to be effective. They operate differently, but toward the same purpose. Scripture supports this notion as does history.

This researcher contends that as multi-site churches continue to grow in number, they should also grow in the ways that make them distinguishable in their community. Multi-site churches dare not go down the road of fast food chains, replicating itself rapidly in order to get in as many financial markets as possible. The church is not sent by God into the world to replicate church buildings, but to reflect God inspired hope. Satellite campuses should be as uniquely different as the twelve disciples who followed Jesus. Some multi-site locations may be as enthusiastic as Peter, some as fiery as James, and other sites as hospitable as Matthew. A Multi-site church finds its strength in its relationship to its other locations, and its servanthship to its community.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

SERMON 1

Title: How Much Is Enough?

Text: Matthew 6:33

Consider the state of the world. The economy is in recession. Our president is subject to a constant flurry of unsubstantiated ridicule. We continue to occupy a land that has no clear threat to the United States as our brothers and sisters in the armed forces die. People are getting rich off death. It has become more profitable to treat a disease than invent a cure. The nation is busy trying to save the world while people are forsaken on our own streets. Politicians are playing insincere religious tunes to gird their selfish agenda and the masses are lulled by them just as a sailor to the sirens deadly song. It seems that it is popular to gather all one can, and give only when it is extremely convenient and easy. And at the end of the day, the big steal big and the little are still little; and I cannot help but wonder, How Much is Enough?

Reading about the close of a center in our community for nonviolent offenders should sadden you. It should awaken in you a call to help others who are less fortunate. This center is a place where people who have made mistakes could pursue avenues towards a better life. The center offered things like G.E.D. classes. It is easy to think that people who are in bad situations should simply find a way to do better. Well, this center was a major part of that process. It helped shape our community for the better, and it's not enough to ignore and think, "I have mine so those people need to find a way to get theirs."

Art Simon asked the same question in his book *How Much is Enough: Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture*. Simon believes that if purpose is reflected for us by the life of Jesus then we can be no more fulfilling than when we are drawing near to God.

When we draw near to God, we do not want to do so selfishly. Rather this is something that is so good to us that we want to share it with others. There is a song that says, "There is room at the cross for all." We come to this cross, drawing near to Jesus. We are drawn to the cross because there is love there. We come to the cross because there is power at the cross. The cross that use to be the emblem for suffering and shame, is now the symbol for victory and triumph. The same way Jesus transformed the cross from trail to triumph is the same way Jesus can turn our situations from test to testimony. So, we draw near the cross.

Now, wait a minute. We can't just draw close with only those in our economic bracket. We can't just draw close with those... I should not step over anyone on my way to get closer to Jesus, but if I witness someone in need I must stop and help them. I do this because where I'm going (near Jesus) there is rest and joy. I do this because one day someone may have to stop and help me on my way to draw nearer to Jesus. Simon reminds us that Jesus promised joy and not happiness. I can't seek Jesus as the text suggest and ignore my neighbor.

Matthew 6:33, assures us that God will add to our life what he deems necessary. The aforementioned song, *There is Room at the Cross*, says that at the cross there is forgiveness, ease of burdens, and peace. Greed does not belong at the cross. Simon noted that six percent of an overall three percent increase in the United States budget could provide a whopping 13 billion a year to work towards ending WORLD hunger. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I tremble for the nation when I consider that God is just." As Christian citizens we have a duty to raise our voices and demand that we help those who so desperately stand in need of help.

Thanks be to God that we have hope and that we have purpose. Simon wrote that Jesus' words to deny self, take up the cross, and follow him (Mark 8:34), sounds much like an opportunity to grit ones teeth. However, this is not a teeth gritting moment. This is a chance to be able to do something for someone else. This is a chance to be a blessing to someone else. The world, even when it seems its bleakest can be helped. This is our hope. This hope assures us when nothing else can. It serves as giving us purpose when it would otherwise be useless.

Simon reminded me that we are earthly Christian because none of us are on earth to stay. We are simply sojourning through this land on our quest for the eternal. Because we have a dual citizenship of heaven and earth, we allow our heavenly citizenship to govern our earthly stay. Thankfully this allows humankind to be capable of succeeding in great works. We can do all things because we serve an all powerful God whose love causes us to be destined for great things. However this can also be our downfall. It is possible to get so wrapped up in our own greatness, or the quest for it, that we forsake our fellow sojourners. If we are to remain true Christian pilgrims then we must be willing to help others achieve their fullness. This is kind; and this is Christian. We all seek after the eternal, but how many of us help others in this same endeavor. If all I can do is help myself in life then that is simply not enough.

With power comes the temptation to arrogance. America is a great nation. This is a reason why we must be careful in our actions. It is easy for the citizen of our nation to look down on places that are struggling with problem of starvation. This is a nation that has so much food we actually get allergic to some of it. It is easy for the citizens of our nation to find it odd that people are in dire straits because they don't even have clean water to

drink. This is a nation who affords its citizens with so many water options that in some restaurants water has its own menu. This is no reason to be arrogant to those who are without these things. Instead of arrogance let's try some humility. Humility will help us see the world as Jesus sees it, a collection of brothers and sisters. Then I must ask, "How much would you give your brother or sister when they are in need? How much would be enough?" It will be enough when they don't need any more.

Center for nonviolent offenders set to close

■ Cumberland County leaders say they can't afford to keep the education and job-training program going.

By Gregory Phillips

Staff writer

A Cumberland County-run center that has provided education and training to keep nonviolent offenders out of jail will close next week.

County leaders decided Thursday they can't afford to keep the Day Reporting Center open after deep cuts in the state's budget for the program. Officials said private bidders may step in, but it's unclear how soon that could happen or what services they'd provide.

The center on Russell Street has offered GED classes, job training and counseling to hundreds of people since the program began in another location in 1994.

The 2011 Justice Reinvestment

See **CENTER**, Page 3B

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Center: County to keep space in case new provider rents it

From **Page 1B**

Act replaced the old Day Reporting Center system with a new Treatment for Effective Community Supervision Program. Starting this month, it was designed to shift from traditional education and job training to a new focus of substance abuse treatment and cognitive behavioral intervention — therapy designed to change behaviors that lead to recidivism.

Each interested county was required to enter a bid for permission to administer the new program. Cumberland's bid was accepted. But while the county asked for \$241,000 in funding, the state offered only \$101,000.

"We don't believe we could provide a service that would last more than few months," Assistant County Manager James Lawson told the county's finance committee Thursday. "In all honesty, and with regret, I'll tell you that I don't believe Cumberland County is the best option for the TECS program."

The three county employees who worked at the Day Reporting Center are mov-

ing to other vacant county jobs, Lawson said. Four private providers also bid on the contract, and the state is confident one of them will step in, he said.

Private providers won bids to operate the programs in other nearby counties, including Sampson, Lee and Hoke. Lawson said Cumberland County will hold on to the office space, adjacent to the probation office, in hopes a new provider will rent it.

In addition to the funded services, free programs were offered at the center. Fayetteville Technical Community College offered classes to pass the high school equivalency exam, and Catholic Charities provided stress management and anger management programs.

"It's just a matter of always being there to help," Kimberly Reeves, the program director, said before the closure was announced. "A lot of them don't have someone to help them along the way."

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APPENDIX B

SERMON 2

Title: There's No Place Like Home

Text: I Samuel 16:1-3

Through the span of time great stories have been told at gathering places and around camp fires. These stories have captivated listeners and taken them on trips to distant and strange lands. Some of the most engrossing tales have been about people who found themselves in unfamiliar territory; and wanted to go home. The classic story of Gilgamesh, the oldest recorded story in our history, tells us of a man who quest for eternal life, and eventually finds himself simply wanting to make it back to his cherished home. The Odyssey of Odysseus weaves a tale of man who traversed seas and peril to make it home his beloved family. How many of us grew up watching the Wizard of Oz? This story for all its symbolism and artistry is at its core the story of a young girl who simply wanted to go home. Nowhere in her story is this more evident than in the climactic scene when she chants with great fervor, "There's no place like home."

We all cherish that place called home. It may not be a mansion, but it's my home. If this is true, then how can we ignore the fact that there are some in our community that have no place to call home? While we enjoy the peace that the solitude of a home can find, do we ignore that some are have no shelter? On yesterday our county started a community project that has been a blessing to many. It's called Habitat for Humanity. Through volunteers houses are built for those in our community that have no place to call home. This is a volunteer driven effort. If we do not support it, people are not assisted. It takes sacrifice.

In Samuel 16:1, God makes a call for action. Samuel is distressed because King Saul has not followed God. As a result, God has taken his anointing away from Saul. Saul

grieves. God ask Saul how long he is going to grieve over Saul. It is not that Saul was wrong in his grieving; the issue is that Saul was grieving so long he was neglecting his opportunity to take action.

There comes a time in all of our live where the time for grieving should turn into a time of action. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. could not simply mourn the second tier status with which people of color were treated. That grief had to turn to action. It turn from grief to marching. It turned from grief to sit-ins. It morphed from grief to rallying cries of, “We shall overcome!” The time for grieving and feeling sorry for the less fortunate of our community is done. It is time for action. Grief will not build a house for the homeless, but action will. Grief will not feed the hungry, but action will. Grief will not cloth the needy, but action will. The devil is satisfied with people stuck in grief, but he is terrified by those who are committed to Godly action.

Never get so comfortable that you let opportunity for kingdom building to pass you by. I hear someone saying, “But pastor, I use my Bible and my prayers to build the kingdom.” That’s excellent, but don’t stop there. Use a hammer and some nails on a Habitat for Humanity House. Use a ladle at a soup kitchen. You’re your eloquent speech to speak positivity into someone’s negative situation.

Our text shows us how God works amongst a people that are willing to be used by him. When we arrive at the text that was read, verse two gives an interesting account for God’s plan involving the success of Samuel’s mission. Samuel is commissioned by God to find and anoint a new king. This was not an easy task because Saul was currently the king and would no doubt be unsupportive of this effort. In verse two God instructs Samuel that in order to keep people from blocking his task or being too inquisitive

toward his endeavors, Samuel should invoke the word ‘sacrifice.’ If Samuel is on a task to sacrifice, it would discourage further questions for curious people because they would not want to be obligated to have to make sacrifices themselves. Unfortunately, we have become a culture that is repealed by the thought of having to do anything that is truly sacrificial. We do not want to sacrifice our time. We do not want to sacrifice our talents. We most certainly do not want to make in monetary related sacrifices. If I announced this morning I was going on an all expense paid trip and when I returned I’d return with many gift that I’d been given. How many of you would want to go on that trip? However, if I told you I was going on a trip that I had to give and sacrifice my things so others could have; how many of you would sign up for that trip? Many of you would say, “Pastor, I’ll see you when you get back.”

Sacrificing is a blessing. First of all, it means you have something to give. Don’t be so disgruntled about making a sacrifice that you overlook the fact that the only to give is to have something in the first place. Sacrificing money means that you’ve been blessed with money in the first place. Sacrificing food means that you’ve been blessed with food in the first place. Sacrificing time means that you’ve been blessed with another day in God’s creation. If it was not for the blessings of God I’d have nothing, but since God has given it to me, I’ll bless someone else.

Roll up your sleeves and help someone. Push your pride aside and help someone. Truth be told, there was a time where you were the one on the receiving end of someone else’s willingness to sacrifice. How sweet it is to be a blessing to someone; to know that through your humility and willingness to be used by God that has someone was blessed. It embodies a simply, but powerful principle. God blessed me to be a blessing to others. I

see in this congregation a body of blessed believers. That means I see a body of believers that should be willing to make sacrifices to bless others.

After all, didn't Jesus make the greatest sacrifice of the all? Jesus sacrificed his life us. Jesus paid it all, and all to him I owe. While it would be easy for me overlook the needs of others, I can't. Neither can you. Never forget, as much as you love your home wherever you live. We are working towards a better home. The apostle Paul said it's a house not made by hand. We work because we have a home in heaven that Jesus has prepared. We take action because it pleasing to God. We sacrifice because it is a blessing. When we get to heaven and see its splendor. When we get to heaven and experience the full glory of God. When we get to heaven and hear the angels singing Holy. It is then that we can truly say, "There's no place like home."

between 10 a.m. and noon on Sundays.

2 The East Regional Library hosts its **50+ Health Fair** today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for seniors, their families and caregivers. Free hand massages by representatives from Miller-Motte College and blood pressure checks by health professionals from Cape Fear Valley Health System will be offered. Representatives from the American Red Cross of Cumberland County, Better Health of Cumberland County, Cape Fear Adult Day Health Care Center, Cumberland County Council on Older Adults, LIFE St. Joseph in the Pines, Stanton Hospitality House, United Way of Cumberland County and the Vision Resource Center also will be on hand. There will be light refreshments, and a door prize will be given away.

For more information, call 485-2955 or go to cumberland.lib.nc.us. The library is at 4809 Clinton Road.

3 The Womack Army Medical Center community will host the sixth annual **Walk to Remember** today in honor of children who died in miscarriages, stillbirths and unexpected deaths. The event begins at the Reilly Road entrance flag pole area at 5:30 p.m., followed by a one-mile walk around the hospital. A bench and memorial will be dedicated at the end of the walk. For details, call Capt. Mark Rendon at 907-7729 or -7185 or 303-2775.

4 Linc Job Services will be in Fairmont today from 10 a.m. to noon for a **job fair**. The Fayetteville business will be accepting applications for government, military, hospital and civilian jobs.

The town will host a job fair with Mega Force Staffing on Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon. Both events are in the Town Hall courtroom at 421 S. Main St.

5 A Raeford/Hoke Habitat for Humanity groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday for House No. 6 at 415 Wright St. For more information, call 875-4065.

Please submit events in writing at least 10 days in advance. Email calendar@fayobserver.com; fax complete details to 486-3545 or deliver to our office. For questions, call 486-3500. Items are printed on a space-available basis. You may also list your event on our online calendar at events.fayobserver.com.

APPENDIX C

SERMON 3

Title: Caught Red Handed

Text: John 3: 1-7

You know, if I can't tell you about anything else, I can tell you about television. Television has almost consumed my life. It's almost embarrassing. There aren't many movies I haven't seen or many shows I haven't watched. I've watched "Law and Orders," "CSI," "Sopranos," and "Martin" reruns.

But sometimes late at night I find myself flipping curiously through the channels. I don't really know what I am searching for. I find myself traveling through T.V. Land. I must admit I begin to "Dream of Jeanie." Maybe it's because I'm "Bewitched" that I'm having these "Happy Days," observing "The Jeffersons," concerned if "Gilligan will ever get off the Island." Laverne, Shirley, Sanford, and son are crowding the scene. It's almost like a "Brady Bunch." I see Nick at Night flash across the bottom of the screen and I have to give Nick a toast and say, "Cheers," because sometimes I just like to go where everybody knows my name and their always glad I came.

Our text, John 3, introduces us to a man named Nicodemus, but for today let's just call him Nick. Nick is someone who speaks a loud message to us. Verse two tells us that Nick came to Jesus by night.

This is interesting. It makes me wonder why Nick decided to come at night. Surely this was not the only time he could approach Jesus. According to the Gospels people approached Jesus often during the daytime. Perhaps Nick decided to wait to come to Jesus at night because he was ashamed.

Ashamed

Nick may have been ashamed of what people would think about him if they saw him go to Jesus. Or he may have been ashamed of what people would say about him for going to Jesus. We are told in verse two that Nick knows who Jesus is. Nick refers to Jesus as rabbi and acknowledges his teachings of God. Nick appears to have a working knowledge of who Jesus is. So, is it shame that has caused Nick to come at night?

How many of us are guilty of being like Nick? We have let a feeling of shame chain and bind our worship of Christ. Just like Nick we know Jesus is great. Yet, shame keeps our hands from clapping. Shame keeps our feet from stomping. Shame keeps our voices from lifting Jesus up. Shame keeps our hearts from being filled. Shame keeps our spirits from soaring.

Shame tells us to sit down, be quiet, they'll laugh at you. Shame tells us people will not understand we need to praise Jesus. Listen, I don't care what story shame tries to tell you today, Jesus is worthy to be praised. The songwriter wrote, "I've gone through the fire, and I've been through the flood. I've been broken into pieces. I've seen the lightning flashing from above. But through it all I remember that Jesus loves me and he cares. And he'll never put more on me than I can bare." Nick hid his praise of Jesus under the cover of night. Don't let shame cause you to hide your praise.

Currently, there is an issue in our courts. A retired prosecutor is trying to deny her decisions were racially motivated. She thought that because time had passed an injustice done against others would be forgotten. But what is done in the dark will eventually come to the light. So, will I spend my time trying to hide it. Or

will I spend my time fixing what I've done wrong. Shame only controls you when you try to deal with it in the dark. Drag your mess into the light where you can give it to Jesus. Don't worry about your neighbor because they have their own mess they're trying to fix.

Status

I also realize that Nick's status may have played a factor in his decision to come to Jesus at night. Nick may have come to understand that his knowledge and education have failed him.

Prior to the conversation between Jesus and Nick, we are told in verse one that Nick is a Pharisee and a leader of the Jews. From that, we can safely assume Nick was an educated man (unless you use the image of a President George W. Bush image of a ruler). That aside, Nick was likely well versed, respected in the community, and seen as a prominent figure. Yet, Nick has something missing in his life.

Nick may be having this conversation with Jesus at night because he realizes that despite all the things he has, he doesn't have enough. Nick does not have Jesus in his life. See church, how much does my knowledge of computers, physics, electronics, theology, and trigonometry afford me without a savior?

That's why so often we see people with nice homes, fancy cars, impeccable wardrobes, invitations to every party, men and women galore, but no happiness. Without Jesus in our life we will all come to Jesus in the night time of our life, having realized that without him our status is ultimately not enough to give us joy.

If God has put you in a place of authority don't abuse it. Use it to help someone. Use it to better your community. Ms. Russ is being accused of

neglecting the power that she had. She was the Goliath and her defendants were seen as poor and unconnected blacks. They didn't know the mayor like she did. They didn't know the judges like she did. The black men who were victims of skewed jurors didn't even personally know a lawyer. Yet, we see that in time that were able to get to know Jesus. Jesus may know change your social status. But he can change your life. He can change your situation.

Stubbornness

An element of Nick's conversation with Jesus that jumps off the page is Nick's stubbornness. Jesus tries to impart wisdom to Nick and it is met with sarcasm. Nick knows who Jesus is, the rabbi. Nick knows what Jesus is, the teacher of God. Nonetheless, Nick's stubbornness causes him to question Jesus' wisdom.

Jesus tells Nick he must be born again. Nick dismissively ask, "Can I enter my mother's womb and be born a second time." It's as if he is saying, "Get real Jesus." Nick is so stubborn, it is no wonder he waited to the last moment to come to Jesus. The day was almost over and out of his own stubbornness he may have finally decided to seek Jesus.

Ms. Russ seems to be guilty of something none of have to be guilty of. She stubbornly refuses to change. Change is a good thing. Keep your VCR, I'll take my blue ray player. Keep your eight tracks, I'll enjoy my mp3s. Keep your Keep your black and white televisions, I'll appreciate my 3D color monitors. Those who resist change are missing out on the newness of life.

If I'm not careful I can be so stuck in my ways that I waste the day away and come to Jesus at the last minute. Even coming last minute, I'm still so stubborn

I can't receive the wisdom he has for me. We wait to the last minute to do everything. Let's not wait to the last minute to come to Jesus as well.

Jesus was loving enough to ignore Nick's shame, status, and stubbornness. Out of this conversation, we have scripture that is arguably the most famous of all gospel scriptures. Jesus tells Nick in verse 16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." You can find that scripture on bumper stickers and on signs at football games. This is the teaching of a savior. This is the redemption of a world.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Retired prosecutor denies jury race bias

■ The state wraps up its case at a hearing in which three death-row inmates say their trials were tainted by discrimination.

By Paul Woolverton

Staff writer

The state rested its case in the Racial Justice Act hearing Tuesday afternoon after retired prosecutor Margaret Buntie Russ spent most of the morning defending herself against claims that she picked jurors based on their race for capital murder trials over the years.

Since Oct. 8, lawyers for three death-row defendants have presented statistical data, trial notes and trial transcripts in their attempt to demonstrate that prosecutors illegally blocked blacks from serving as jurors for death penalty murder trials.

See **HEARING**, Page 4A

Hearing: Defense plans to have civil rights activist testify today

From Page 1A

If they can convince Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Greg Weeks that the race of jurors was a significant factor in their three trials and in the court system, their death sentences will be commuted to life in prison.

Defense lawyer Malcolm "Tye" Hunter asked Russ about her strikes of black and Hispanic jurors at gang-initiation murder trials in Fayetteville in 1998. A mix of black and Hispanic gang members led by Lumbee Indian Christina Walters

were prosecuted for the shooting deaths of two women. Walters is one of the three defendants in this Racial Justice Act hearing.

Hunter questioned Russ about the trial of Maurice Parker, a state trooper who murdered a car dealer in 1993. During Parker's trial in 1998, Superior Court Judge D. Jack Hooks ruled that Russ was wrong to dismiss a black juror after Parker's lawyers questioned whether there was racism in her decision to strike him.

In light of that judge's ruling against Russ in 1998, Hunter asked Russ if she believed she acted improperly when she tried to strike that juror.

Russ in 1998 listed other reasons to dismiss the juror, such as his body language and the way he answered her questions during jury selection. The judge in 1998 did not accept her stated reasons.

"At the time that we tried that case, I would not have tried to peremptorily dismiss that juror had I not genuinely believed that what I had seen and heard rose to the level of something that I should be concerned about as an advocate for the state of North Carolina, for the people of North Carolina," Russ testified Tuesday.

"I believed at the time that I did not use race, and I still believe that I did not use race, sir. I have a deep and abiding respect for the court, the system, and, as I said, I accepted what the judge said," Russ said.

The defense team and prosecutors spent consider-

able time arguing over whether a note that Russ made during the Parker jury selection could be discussed. The note says, "What an (epithet). He'll never know the law."

The defense team wanted to know if this was directed at Judge Hooks.

In cross-examination, Russ said her note was directed at Parker.

"He had been extremely cocky. He had been extremely confrontational. He had been extremely belligerent in the courtroom," she said. She interpreted his behavior as attempts to antagonize the prosecutors.

"For the most part, they were, by this time, for lack of a better term, taunts or 'nanny-nanny-boo-boo' things," Russ said.

The jury found Parker guilty of murder, then deadlocked on whether to sentence him to death. With the deadlock, he got a life sentence.

The Racial Justice Act defense team represents Walters, Tilmon Golphin and Quintel Augustine.

Golphin is on death row for the murders of a state trooper and a Cumberland County deputy. Augustine is on death row for the murder of a Fayetteville police officer. Golphin and Augustine are black.

After the state rested its case, the defense team submitted several documents for rebuttal evidence. These included a partial transcript of the state's first Racial Justice Act hearing, which was held early this year for Marcus Reymond Robinson of Fayetteville. Robinson won his claim and was removed from death row.

Today, the defense plans to have civil rights activist and criminal defense lawyer Bryan Stevenson testify. Stevenson heads the Equal Justice Initiative, an Alabama-based nonprofit organization that studies inequities in the courts.

Stevenson testified in February at Robinson's Racial Justice Act hearing. He said efforts to eradicate racist practices have been hindered by lawyers' reluctance to accuse each other of racist practices and prosecutors who try to circumvent the rules.

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Russ

APPENDIX D

SERMON 4

Title: But Wait, There's More...

Text: Luke 19: 32-40

I must admit I have never intentionally watched an infomercial. However, I must admit that I have watched my fair share of infomercials. I'm just flipping through the channel and I pause just momentarily on an infomercial. The infomercial is describing sharp knives. For a minute I'm entertained. As I make up my mind to turn the channel the announcer says, "But Wait, There's More." I'm intrigued so I watch the newest offer on pots that don't stick. I reach again to turn the channel and again the announcer instinctively says, "But Wait, There's More." I end up watching the infomercial for about half an hour because the announcer kept enticing me with the phrase, "But Wait, There's More."

Luke tells us, according to his 19th chapter, that Jesus is in transition. If you have an annotated Bible with notes in the margins and headings at the beginning of every story, you will note that the title of this narrative is the "Triumphal Entry." You can generally find that subtitle right above the 28th verse. The reader is told right away this part of the story is to be a triumphal moment.

Jesus is between cities and prepares himself to go into Jerusalem. The disciples are told to go get a colt for Jesus to ride on and they do as they are told. I was proud of the disciples because they finally seem to get "it." They do not question Jesus. They don't even doubt Jesus. They simply do what Jesus tells them to do and they find what Jesus tells them they'll find. Church, I know it's not always easy to follow Jesus, but I promise if you do what Jesus says do, you'll find what Jesus tells you that you'll find.

The colt has been fetched. The scene has been set. Let the party begin. Jesus approaches Jerusalem. According to verses 36-38 a parade ensued. People came out of the city and began to worship and praise Jesus. People laid down their clothes. People came outside the city to lay down branches. I can hear the crowd as they shout "Hosanna" and "blessed is the king." This was a great party!

Often in the black church we get to verses 39-40 and proclaim that we will not let the Pharisees hush our praises. We chant how, "I don't want any rocks crying out for me." Congregants get happy to hear of this massive parade. Jesus is victorious. Jesus has had his triumphal entry. We close our bibles, finish the sermon, and go home. But Wait, There's More.

Verse 41 has something important to add to this story. Luke 19: 41 reads, "As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it." This does not fit. How can this be part of a triumphal story. We are told that Jesus has his own parade. People came out of the city to worship him. Clothes and branches have been laid down. Why does Jesus begin to weep? This seems completely out of place. Here we see a very vulnerable Jesus. Jesus is very human. Praises are going up and yet he looks to the city and it saddens him.

Jesus had been to Jerusalem as a child. This was not his first time beholding the city. I believe that when Jesus looked at the city, he saw more than just buildings. Jesus saw more than just how the light shown on the rooftops of the houses. Jesus looked into the city and he saw people in trouble. Jesus saw the women who were being abused and were not able to make it out to the parade. Jesus looked into the city. He saw the people who were institutionalized and lost in

the system who were not able to make it out to the parade. Jesus saw Amber Alerts going off and children being victimized and they were not able to make it out to the parade. Jesus looked into the city and saw people like me. People who come to praise Jesus only when it's convenient or they're in trouble. And Jesus wept. Just as he wept in the Gospel of John outside Lazarus' tomb, Jesus' human emotion spills over onto the Gospel's pages.

As emotionally moved as Jesus was by what he saw in the city, Jesus could have turned around and left. But Wait, There's More. Because Jesus loves us so much, he kept going into the city. THAT'S THE TRIUMPH. The triumph isn't found in the parade. The triumph is that Jesus loved us enough to come into the messiness of the city. This is not just triumph for Jesus. This was triumph for us all.

There was a recent report about a rape in a neighborhood right down the street from here. We can't ignore that. We can't write that place off as unreachable. I grew up in a community where it was so bad that not even the pizza man would deliver there. Our church can't be like the pizza man. We can't afford to deem some neighborhoods as too rough to evangelize to. We can't look at a group of people as if they are lost and beyond reach. Jesus went into that messed up city. He went into those forsaken neighborhoods. He challenges us to do the same. We have triumph and we have to let the world know they can have triumph too. Go spread the good news of the Gospel. Jesus went in to bring us out.

Woman reports sexual assault

A woman told Fayetteville police she was kidnapped and sexually assaulted while walking on Rim Road last week.

The attack happened Oct. 14, police said, and the victim reported it Friday, Police Department spokesman Gavin MacRoberts said Monday.

The woman said she was walking on Rim Road about

4 a.m. when she was approached by an older model gray Chevrolet Blazer, police said. Two men offered her a ride, which she declined.

One of the men got out of the vehicle and forced her inside. She told police she was assaulted by one of the men near Old Raeford Road.

The woman later was let out near Rim and Cliffdale

roads, MacRoberts said.

Police said one of the suspects is described as black man between 180 and 200 pounds with his hair was in dreadlocks. He wore a dark-colored, long-sleeved thermal shirt.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 433-1856 or Crimestoppers at 483-8477.

— Caitlin Dineen

APPENDIX E

SERMON 5

Title: A Good Farmer

Text: Matthew 13: 3-9

If someone was going to sit down with you and begin to write your life story, what would you tell the writer? Would you tell great stories of triumph and accomplishment? How many of us would regal the writer with tales of battles won and victories achieved. My guess is that most of us would. We probably would not mention our faults. We would probably gloss over any of our shortcomings. We might also be tempted to paint ourselves in the most flattering ways we can think of. Whatever we decided to call our life's story it would have to come with a small disclaimer that reads, "Based on a true story." The reality is that very few people are willing to admit they are the former addict, recovering liar, or rehabilitated sinner.

It came as a shock to many people that gang activity had reached the quiet rural areas of Hoke County and Fair Bluff. We shun young men who would live that type of lifestyle. While the community readies itself to vilify anyone fitting a description similar to that of a thug, the church cannot. Truthfully, there isn't a big difference between the criminal in the newspapers and the Christian in the church. The Christian in the church celebrates victory, but if we hadn't had any issues we wouldn't have needed victory in the first place.

In this Parable of Jesus we are shown a farmer. This farmer is busy tilling in his field. This parable lifts up the notions of reaping and sowing. To make sure we are all on the same page let me say that to reap is to get, and to sow is to give. Giving and getting are central to understanding the direction of this parable.

As I focus on this parable's motif of giving and receiving, I begin to wonder. What are we sowing today? What are we giving out? It seems very obvious what we are reaping. We've seen our communities become war zones. And I wonder what we are sowing because it seems obvious what we are reaping. We've seen our elected officials put partisan politics before the needs of the citizens. People have become bitter and divided. And I wonder what we are sowing because it seems obvious what we are reaping. Violence escalates in schools and gun shots ring out as students lose their lives. And I wonder what we are sowing today, because it seems obvious what we are reaping.

I believe the Apostle Paul had the parable of the farmer in mind when he wrote Galatians 6:7, "... you reap what you sow." But I believe because of the state of the world, that saying has become twisted and inverted. As a survival mechanism, we have learned to sow what we see being reaped. We give out what we see being taken up.

Let me explain it this way. I'm mean because I live in a mean world. I'm cold hearted because the world is cold. I don't take time to be kind to others because no one takes the time to be kind to me. I lay my religion down because everyone does. I cut love off because this is a loveless world and I've been hurt too many times. I can't pray for you because this is a "dog eat dog" and I have to pray for myself. I sow all the bad things I see being reaped!

Yet, I remember Jesus' parable of that farmer. And in my mind I can see that farmer, his hands raw from years of working his fields. I can see his sun-beaten brow. Look and see the farmer as he busies himself about the task of working his field. Jesus says that as the farmer scatters his seed some falls in good places and some in not so good

places. I have to ask that farmer, “What are you doing? Don’t you know better? Why are you wasting good seed on bad soil?”

The revelation came to me that the farmer can see things in the soil that no one else can. Soil becomes good soil because the farmer takes the time and effort to help it mature. The farmer tills and cultivates the soil. Because even when soil looks brittle the, farmer can see more. Even when soil looks cracked the farmer can see more. Even when the soil is seemingly bad, the farmer can see potential for growth. This parable is not just a story about being good soil. It’s a lesson about the farmer and the bad soil.

The world today seems to be full of bad soil. The world seems to be full of bad situations and bad people. Bad soil appears to be corroding the earth. We need a farmer today, but not just any farmer. We need a good farmer coming with a good seed. We need the type of farmer Jesus tells us about in his parable. We need a farmer who is willing to work with the good soil and the bad soil. A farmer who will not shy away from situations that look unproductive. We need a farmer who does not run from the messy work. The farmer Jesus described is a farmer willing to go into the inner cities. This farmer is not intimidated by gang activity. This farmer is willing to do the messy work of helping those in situations that are not cleaned up and tidy.

We need the farmer named Jesus, a farmer who will sow good seed in places that look bad. These bad looking places are the places that need the good seed of Jesus the most. When my life was messy, unfruitful looking, and barren, I’m glad Jesus could see more than just bad soil. Jesus sowed good seed in my life and I’m glad he continues to go to the places that look bad, and sow a good seed. Every messed up person is good place for the work of Jesus. Our community will be stronger than ever, because the same

farmer that worked a miracle in your life is still in business. Tell the thug in your neighborhood that there's a farmer you'd like to introduce him to. Once you have their attention. Once you've peeked there curiosity. Tell them that the farmer's name is Jesus.

FAIR BLUFF

6 people sought for multiple crimes

By Deuce Niven

Contributor

FAIR BLUFF — Gang-related activity and other crimes have the Fair Bluff Police Department asking the public for help in locating criminal suspects.

Police Chief Justin Hewett on Sunday, in a news release, provided a list of six wanted people.

Hewett succeeded veteran Police Chief Marty Lewis, who was fired after being arrested in May, allegedly in the middle of a drug deal while in uniform, seated in his patrol car, in the Post Office parking lot within sight of the Lumber River.

Lewis was fired the same day a Columbus County grand jury indicted him on drug trafficking and conspiracy charges. Also fired was Town Clerk Tamika Packer, charged with trafficking in a controlled prescription medication.

Hewett said rebuilding the department has meant establishing trust in the community, an ongoing process.

"With having a Police Department with all new officers



Green



McMillan



Martin



Riggins



Johnson



Bullock

and not knowing who to trust, citizens of Fair Bluff have been reluctant to assist in investigations in fear of retaliation, but some have spoken out in hopes to make their community a safer place to live," Hewett said. "Numerous reports of breaking and entering, shots fired and gang activity have been reported and investigated."

Hewett promised "fair and impartial" investigations from his department, while providing a list of people wanted by the department that includes:

■ Trevon Unique Green of Chadbourn, wanted on assault inflicting serious injury and gang activity charges. He is accused in an Aug. 10 case in the area of Anderson and Rogers streets. As many as 50 people

began to disperse as officers arrived, Hewett said.

A short time later, officers were called to Columbus Regional Healthcare, where Cordell Wright of Fair Bluff was being treated after being beaten about his face and body. A tooth was missing from the injured man.

Police believe the case involved the "GMS" street gang of Fair Bluff and the "Zone 6" street gang of Chadbourn. Green is not believed to be the only person involved in the beating, but a lack of cooperation from witnesses, and a lack of physical evidence, prevented others from being charged, Hewett said.

■ Jerrell Shireik McMillan of Fair Bluff, wanted on breaking and entering and damage to property charges in a Sept. 27 case.

■ Otis Jerel Martin of Fair Bluff, wanted on three counts each of larceny after breaking and entering, possession of stolen goods and obtaining property by false pretense charges.

■ Giovannia Teresa Riggins of Fair Bluff, wanted on charges of breaking and entering, larceny after breaking and entering, and two counts each of possession of stolen goods and obtaining property by false pretense.

■ Julian Isaiah Johnson of Fair Bluff, wanted on charges of breaking and entering and damage to property in a July 22 break-in at Lovett's Auto Plaza.

■ Owen Berry Bullock III of Fair Bluff, wanted on a charge resisting police and probation violations.

APPENDIX F

SERMON 6

Title: Just a Reminder

Text: Romans 5: 6-8

Somebody told a lie. I guess I shouldn't be surprised, people lie all the time. The dog ate the homework that I never did. I'm late for work because I was stuck in traffic, but the traffic is code for "I over slept." I tell you that our relationship didn't work out because of me, not you. Yet, in my mind I'm thinking that it really is you.

We conveniently call these things excuses, but they are still lies. We lie all the time.

So I am not surprised today that someone has lied. But there is one lie in particular that amazes me. It was told before the whispers of our president being born in Kenya started and before the scandals of the Real Housewives of Atlanta. The lie goes like this, "The church is for perfect people." Now, I know this is not the first time we have heard this. What is amazing about this lie is not the lie itself, but the way we have bought into this lie.

If we were to believe that the church was made for perfect people than the preacher with his nice robe, toned voice, and inviting presence is perfect. If we were to believe this than the choir is full of melodic and angelically perfect people. If we were to believe this than the ushers stand in righteousness and move only in Holiness. If we were to believe this than all the deacons must sit in the wisdom of Solomon and charity of Abraham. And if we were to believe all of this, than the church has become a conclave where no one has any spot or any wrinkle. If indeed the church is a place for perfect people.

And because some of us have been crazy enough to buy into this lie, we are hurting the church. For people will not come to church. They believe in Jesus, but they will not come. They desire a closer walk with Jesus, but they will not come. They want to know what all the fuss is about God, but they will not come. They will not come because the church is for perfect people and I am not perfect. Therefore, I will not fit in. They will sniff me out as soon as I walk through the door. I will stand out like a black man at a Ku Klux Klan meeting and all the perfect people there will know I'm not one of them. They will know I'm not perfect like they are. So, I better stay away.

Have you seen the new hospital being built a mile from our church? I'm sure you have because it's hard to miss. For years now our community has been asking and working to get our own local hospital. As it currently stands, when someone in Hoke County is sick, they have to travel to the middle of Fayetteville to get care from a hospital. When I pass that hospital I'm reminded that this county should have another type of hospital. This hospital does not do heart surgeries, but can still perform heart transformations. This hospital is the church.

Now listen church, I know we have worked in our salvation. I know our hand is in God's hand and the Father walks with us. I am thankful for this. Every day I am thankful for this. I am:

- Holy Ghost filled
- fire baptized
- born of the spirit, washed in the blood
- set out to be set apart
- left out to be lifted up
- blessed in the city and blessed in the field
- no weapon formed against me shall prosper
- and I'm on my way to heaven any how

But this is just a reminder, none of us were born that way. We were converted. Just as Paul was converted, so are we. In Romans 5: 6-8, Paul speaks to a church that he has not had the pleasure of worshipping with. He has not met them face-to-face, yet Paul knows them. He reminds this budding church to remember their roots.

Paul begins with a focus on the weak. Paul believes that in an appropriate and proper time God blesses us. This acknowledges that our imperfections leave us weak and wanting. God sees our needs and will not leave us in despair. Strikingly Paul says while “WE” were yet weak. Paul includes himself in this observation. He says not only do you stand in need at times, but I do as well. We are weak but God is strong. The weakness is not of authority because Paul has that. This is not a weakness of riches because Paul speaks of no need of money here. Paul and the church are weak because they are sinners. These people that Paul writes to are weak, sinners, but they are the church. This is a long way away from, “The church is a place for perfect people.”

According to Galatians 4:4 Paul believed when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. So when Paul speaks of God moving in due time he imparts his belief in the fulfillment of God’s purpose. Someone should wake up for this. God has a purpose for you and I don’t want you to miss it. His purpose does not exclude the sinner. It is almost as if the plan was made for the sinner.

Paul speaks of the good person, I can’t help but wonder what made a person good. In all this talk about sin and perfection, what does Paul think makes a good person. It’s easy for me to see who the good are. I just look and see it. We get the outside all fixed up, then we go the heart matters. We have self-help books on, “How to Have More

Confidence," "How to Say 'Yes' to Happiness," "How to Drive Your Man---or Woman Wild," and "How to Become Rich." I think you're getting the picture. As humans, we try to be perfect inside and out. The problem is - we can't. And again I am reminded that Jesus can make us new. Paul believes in conversion. Even if we are born absolutely drop dead beautiful, have no physical ailments, are highly intelligent and highly talented; we still get old and die.

I was a filthy rag. I was a sinner. I was a broken pot in need of a potter's hands. I was undeserving and Paul says Christ died for me. Paul says Christ died for us. I did not have to put on a false persona, nor did I have to pretend to be something that I was not. God saw us for exactly what are, his children. We mess up, but this does not make us children without a Father. This makes us children with a patient Father.

Christ did not leave us on the sea tossing about in the storms of life. Christ did not leave us stuck without hope. Christ did not abandon with a vain search for perfection. Yet, while I was doing all the things I should not do, Jesus saved me. Just as he converted Paul in his sin, God converts us.

There's more than one hospital being built in our community. With every new soul saved this heavenly hospital becomes stronger. Every time we serve our community, it becomes healthier.

How does that hymn go? It's the one the talks about when I was whole, when everything was perfect, and when I had my life together I met the Lord. How does that one go? That's right, it doesn't exist. God made his church for the lost as well as the found. Our church today is like the church that ancient church of Rome. It is full of

people who were saved while they were yet sinners. Paul wanted to remind the church that it is for all. The sinners are included because at one point in time we were that sinner.

This is just a reminder that his only begotten Son for the imperfect sinner that you are, not the perfect person you pretend to be. Remember where God has bought you from and be blessed.

thority to discuss the pros and cons berland County more say in the \$14 million in funding reserves allo- at phillips@fayobserver.com or 486-3596.

HEALTH PAVILION HOKE



Staff photos by Melissa Melvin-Rodriguez

Concrete finishers work on a sidewalk leading to the main entrance of the Health Pavilion Hoke on Monday. For a photo slideshow featuring a look inside the facility, go to fayobserver.com/photos.

Hospital takes shape

■ Cape Fear Valley Health System expects to open the first phase of its new Hoke County complex in March.

By Gregory Phillips
Staff writer

RAEFORD — Mike Nagowski said he's used to people telling him the new hospital in Hoke County looks great.

"What you see before us isn't the hospital," the Cape Fear Valley Health System CEO told a small group of local leaders who assembled at the construction site on U.S. 401 Monday morning. "I tell them, 'You haven't seen anything yet.'"

See **HOSPITAL**, Page 3B



Breeden Blackwell, director of government relations for Cape Fear Valley Health System, speaks about the importance of the Health Pavilion Hoke at the hospital's construction Monday.

HMS COUNTY

Hospital: \$100 million project helped by \$57 million in loans

From Page 1B

The wide facade visible from the highway does include the main entrance to the 41-bed hospital, but the bulk of the inpatient facility will be built behind the new building starting next year.

Health Pavilion Hoke is the block of outpatient medical offices to the left of that entrance, scheduled to open in March.

The \$100 million medical campus project has secured \$57.3 million in low-interest loans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development. Cape Fear Valley will make up the difference.

Among the offices opening in March is a primary care office that will act as an urgent care center until the hospital's emergency room opens.

Cape Fear Valley's Emergency Department is the busiest in the state, Nagowski said.

"This is going to alleviate a lot of pressure on that hospital," said Randy Gore, state director of rural development for USDA.

The wing opening in March will have a lab and a pharmacy and offer services including cardiology, pulmonary and oncology —

"the kind of services as the community grows that they're going to need more and more of," Nagowski said.

The second floor of the new building and the eventual hospital will be devoted to obstetrics and gynecology.

About 80 percent of the babies born to Hoke County residents are birthed at Cape Fear Valley, Nagowski said. The unfinished third floor is set aside for future expansion.

The hospital is expected to open in mid- to late 2014 and will bring 360 jobs to the area.

"It's chugging along pretty quick," said Steve Steinbacher of Criterion Healthcare, the development company overseeing the project.

Construction is already under way on a smaller hospital two miles to the west, built by FirstHealth of the Carolinas. Each project is expected to attract commercial growth to the county.

"What you see on this 60-acre campus," said Breeden Blackwell, Cape Fear Valley's director of government relations, "is all about teamwork."

Staff writer Gregory Phillips can be reached at phillipsg@fayobserver.com or 486-3596.

APPENDIX H
PRE-SURVEY/POST-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questions

1. This congregation makes efforts to reach all ethnicities.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

2. This church is involved in its community.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

3. This church is a place of nurturing.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

4. Charity work is important to this church.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

5. God is the constant focal point of all the church's endeavors.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

6. The same group of people does most of the ministry work around the church.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

7. Prayer is emphasized as an important aspect of one's Christian life.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

8. One translation of the Bible is often viewed with more reverence than other translations.			
☐ Strongly Agree	☐ Agree	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly Disagree

9. This church actively works to bring new converts to Christ.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

10. This church teaches the importance of tithing.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

11. Preaching always centers on God.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

12. This is a church where people can freely be themselves without the threat of ridicule.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

13. The Bible is taught to be the inerrant Word of God.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

14. This church has a program in place to help new converts adjust to their new life as a Christian.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

15. The preaching moment is a challenging and uplifting experience for the congregation.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

16. Fellowship is a focal point of this ministry.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

17. Preaching often involves political and social issues from the community.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

18. One's age commonly determines what class I go to for Biblical learning purposes.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

19. The trinity of God, Son, and Holy Spirit is taught.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

20. This church works to develop strong followers of God.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

21. Congregants are regularly encouraged to engage one another in a cordial way, especially those they have yet to meet.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

22. Two very important observations for this church are communion and baptism.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

23. This church commonly engages its community outside of traditional church settings.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

24. This congregation prefers something consistent/steady as oppose to something uncommon/changing.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

25. We often incorporate eating into our programs.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

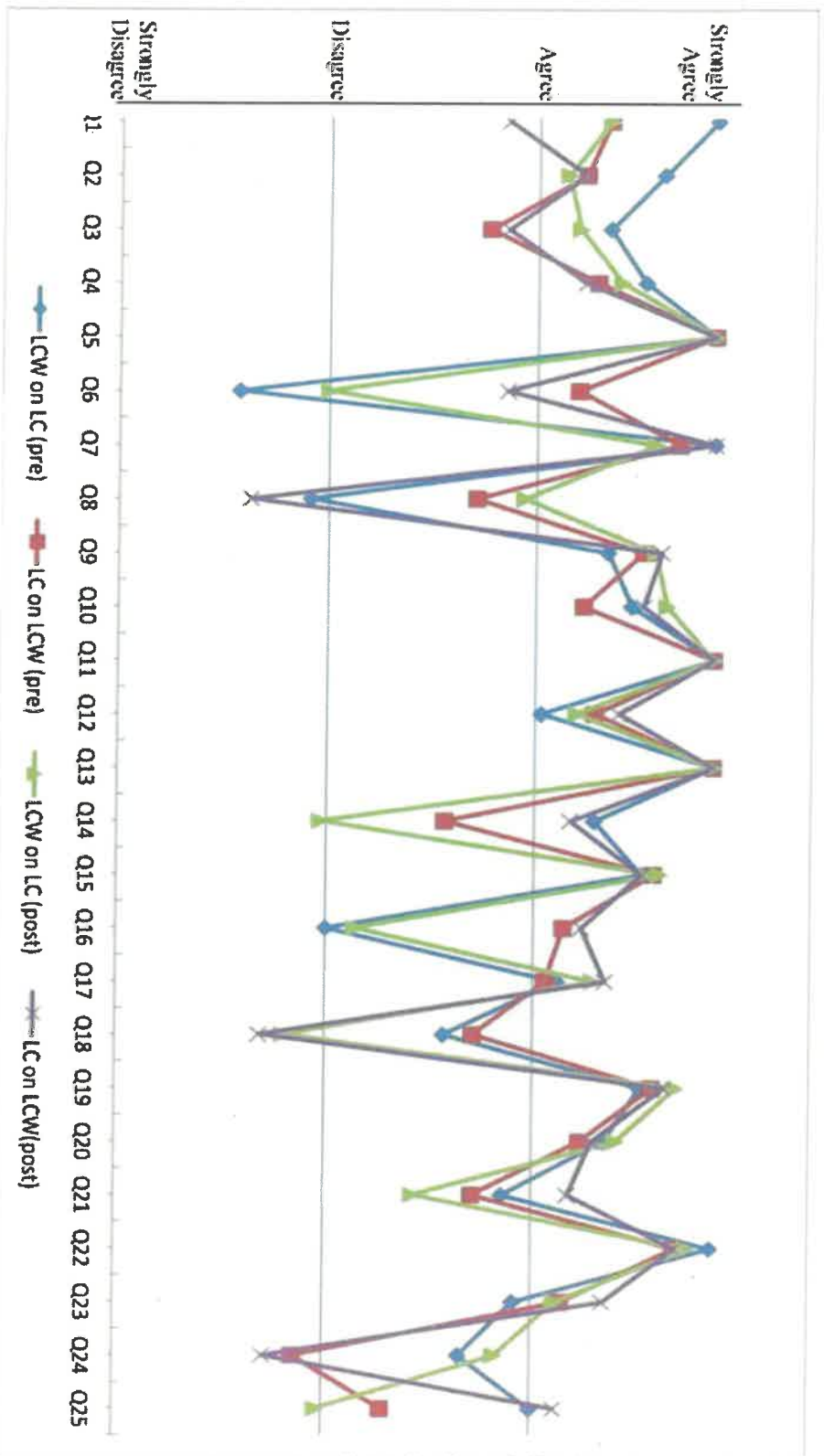
☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX H

PRE-SURVEY/POST-SURVEY RESULTS

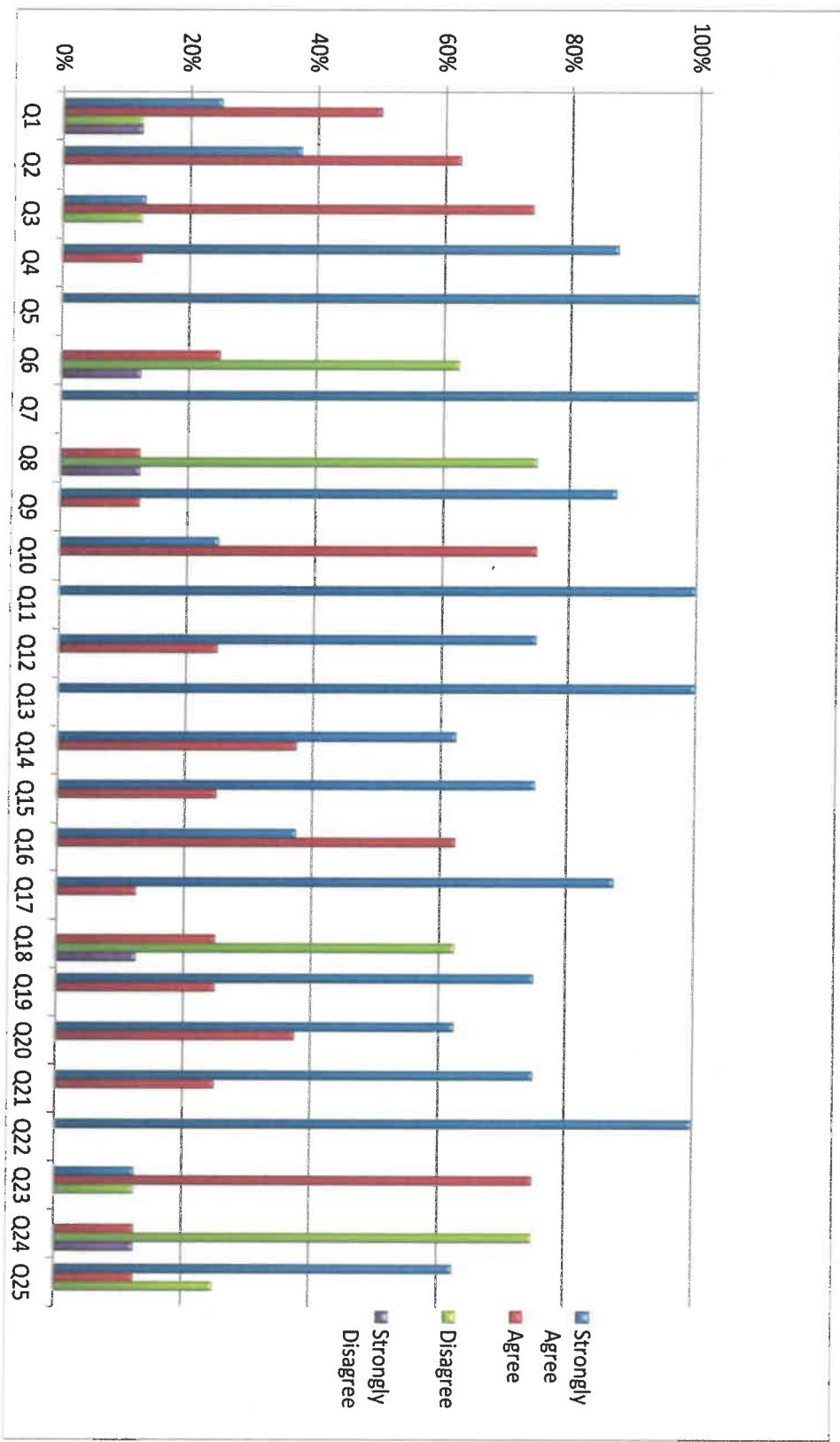
Pre-Survey vs Post Survey Comparisons Of Lewis Chapel West



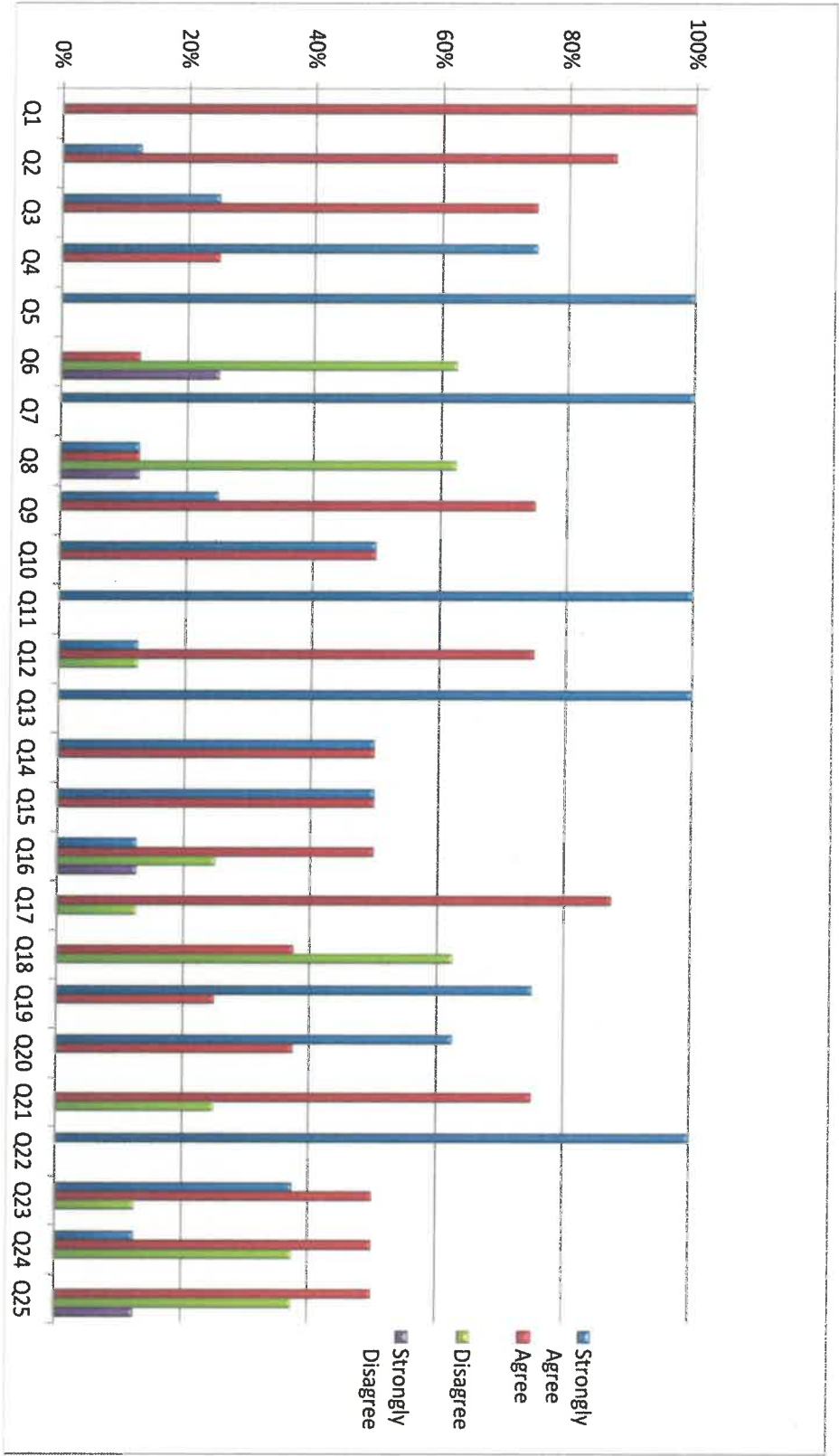
*LCW = Lewis Chapel – West

*LC = Lewis Chapel focus group

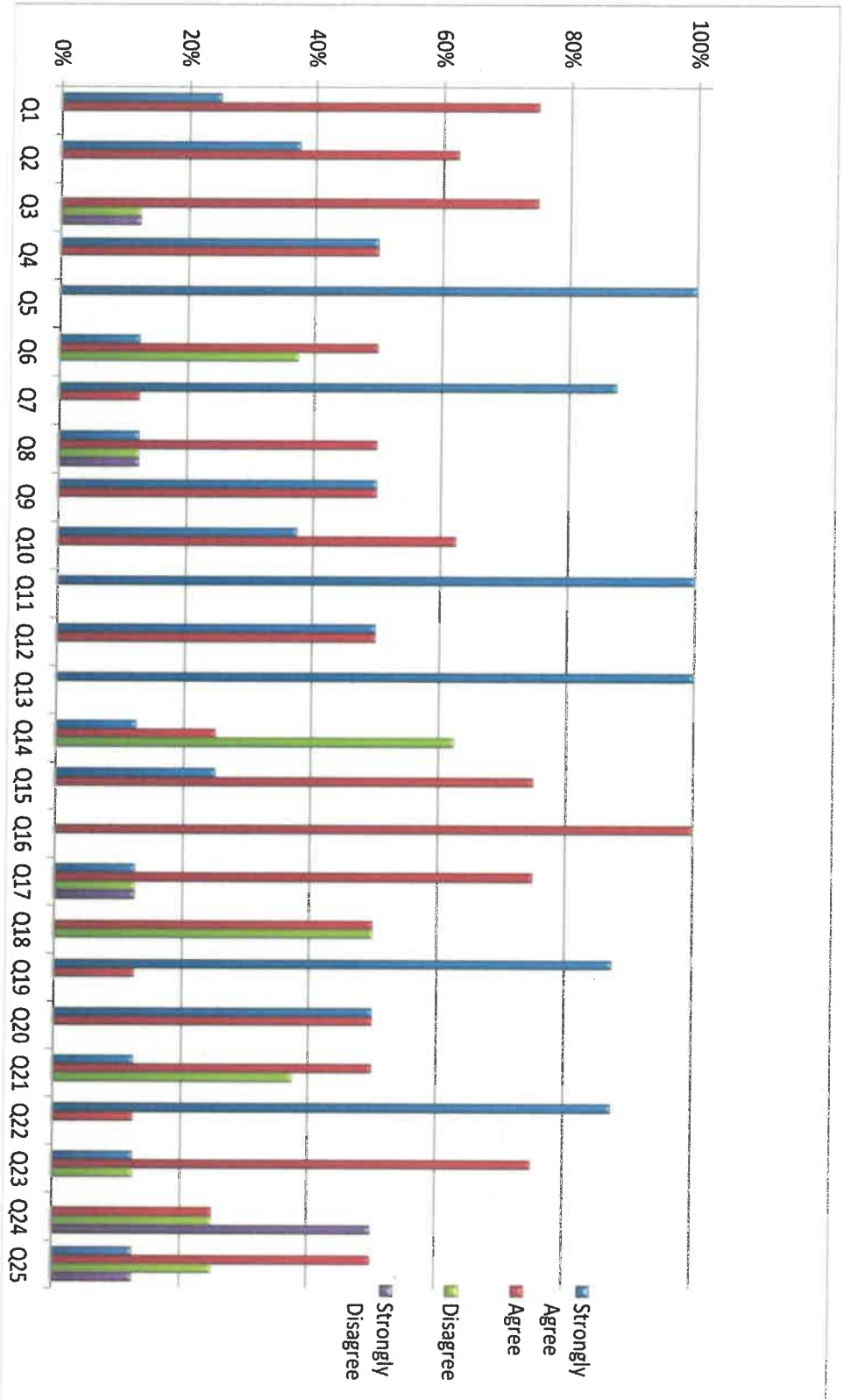
Pre-Survey Results by LC - West Focus Group
Concerning LC - West



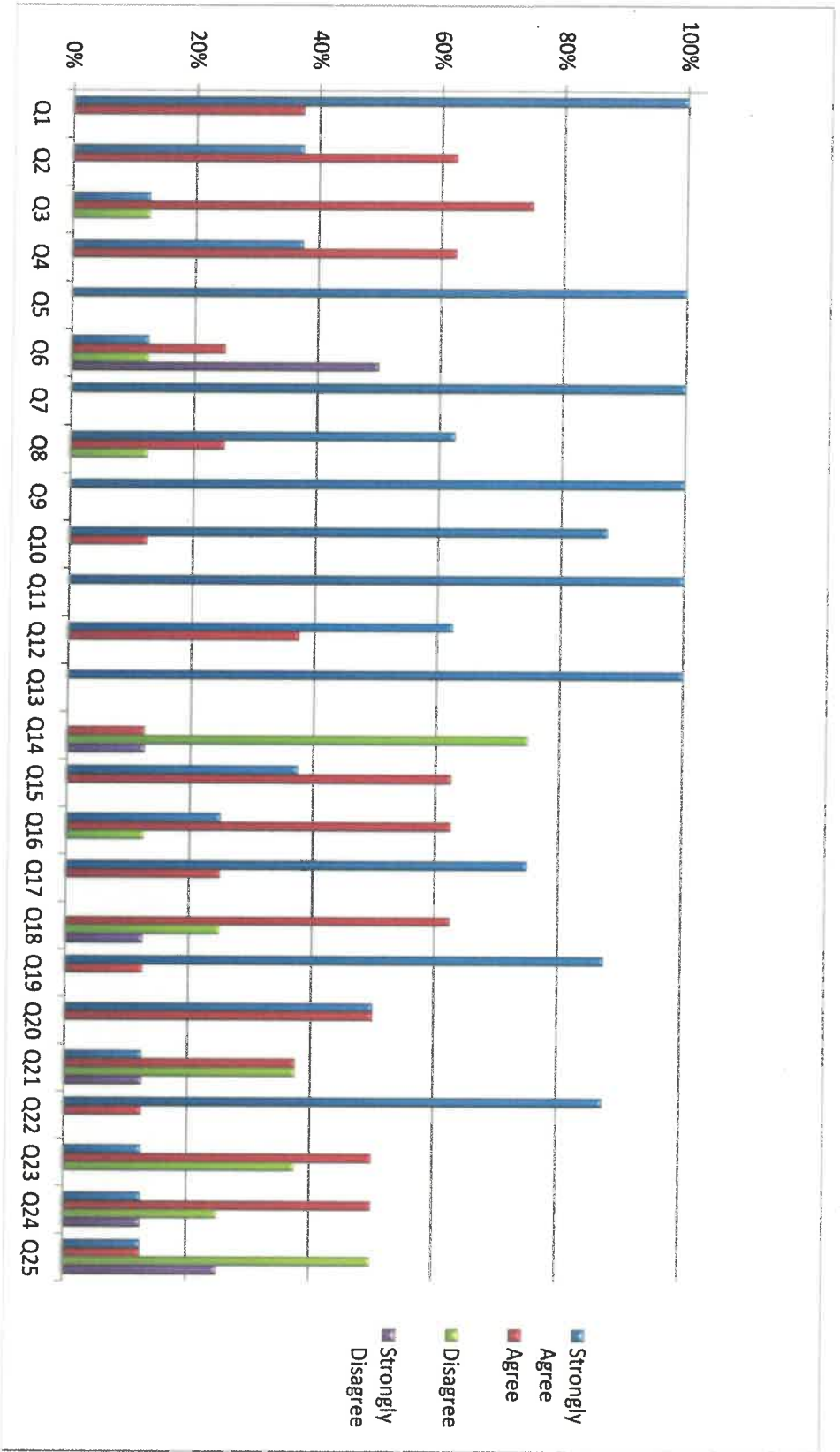
Pre-Survey Results by LC- West Focus Group
Concerning Lewis Chapel



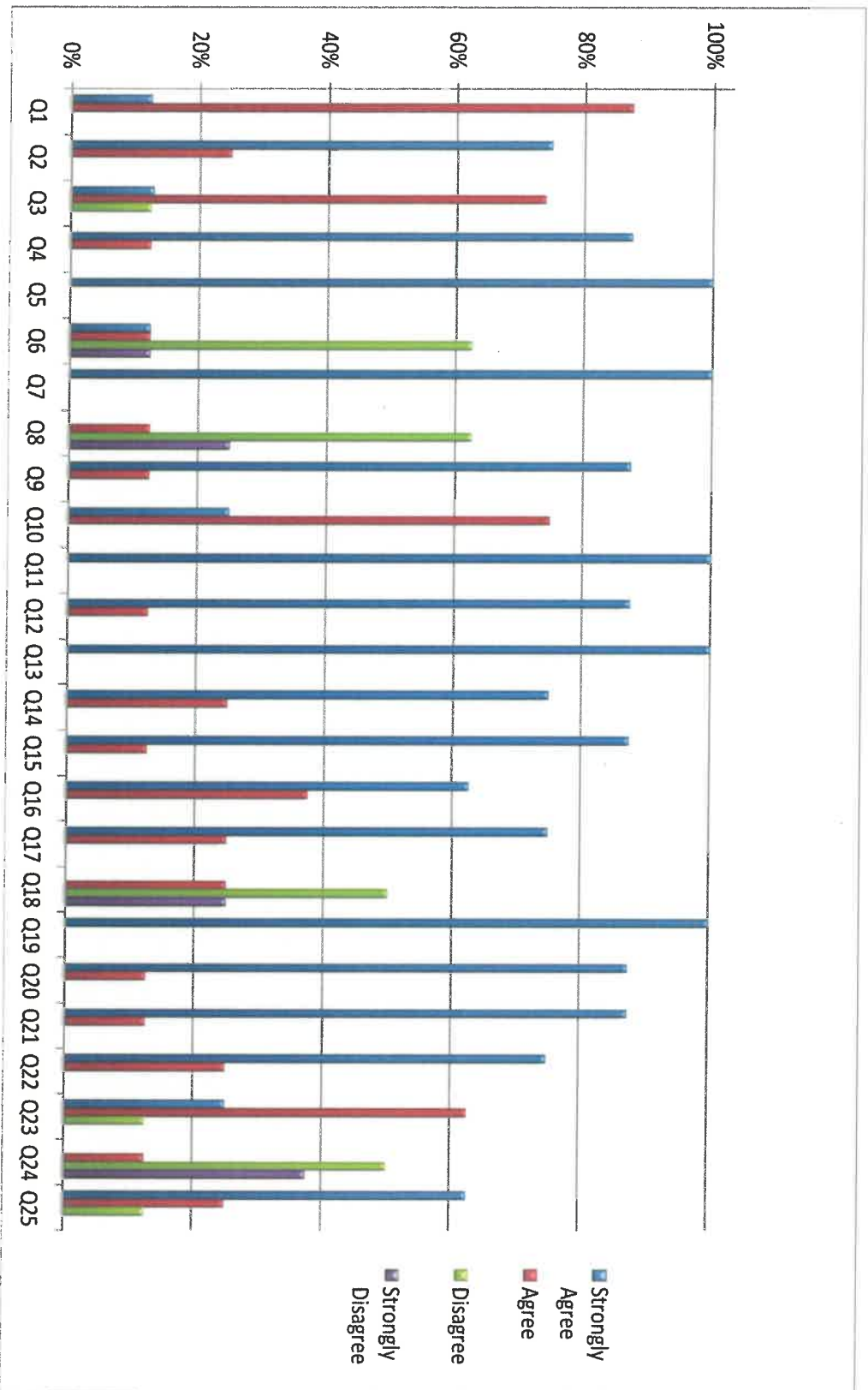
Pre-Survey Results by LC Focus Group Concerning Lewis Chapel West



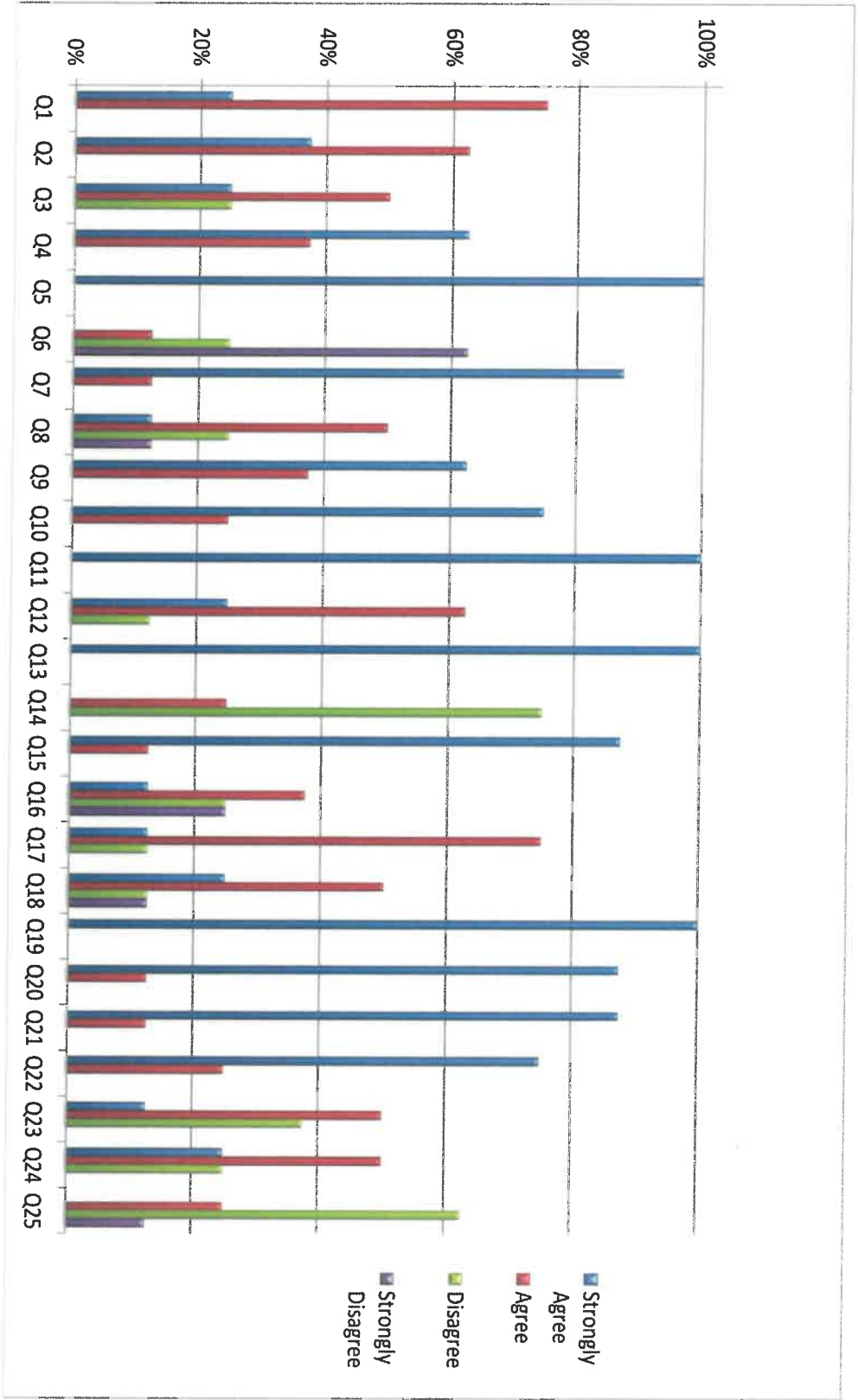
Pre-Survey Results by LC Focus Group Concerning Lewis Chapel



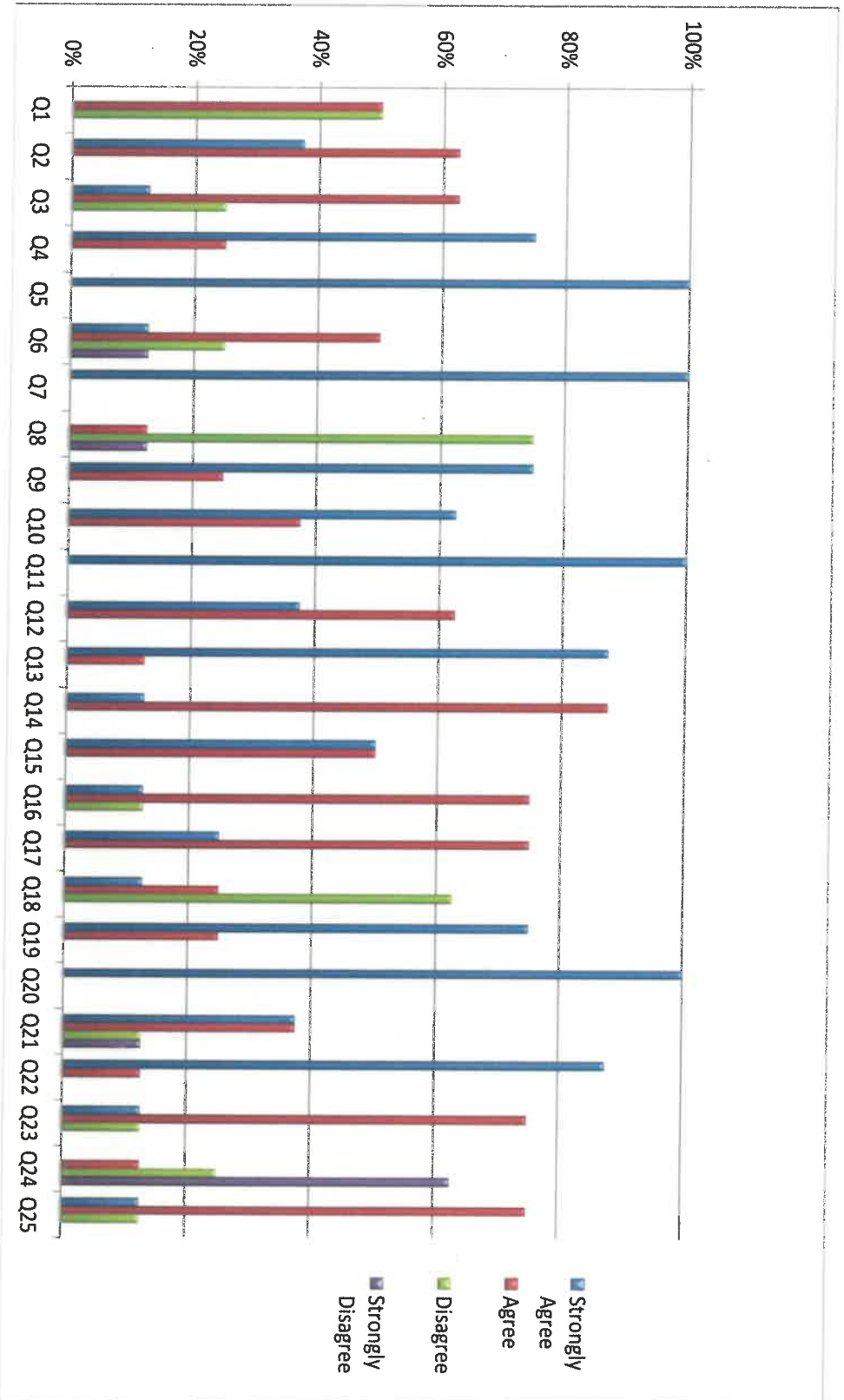
Post-Survey Results by LC - West Focus Group
Concerning LC - West



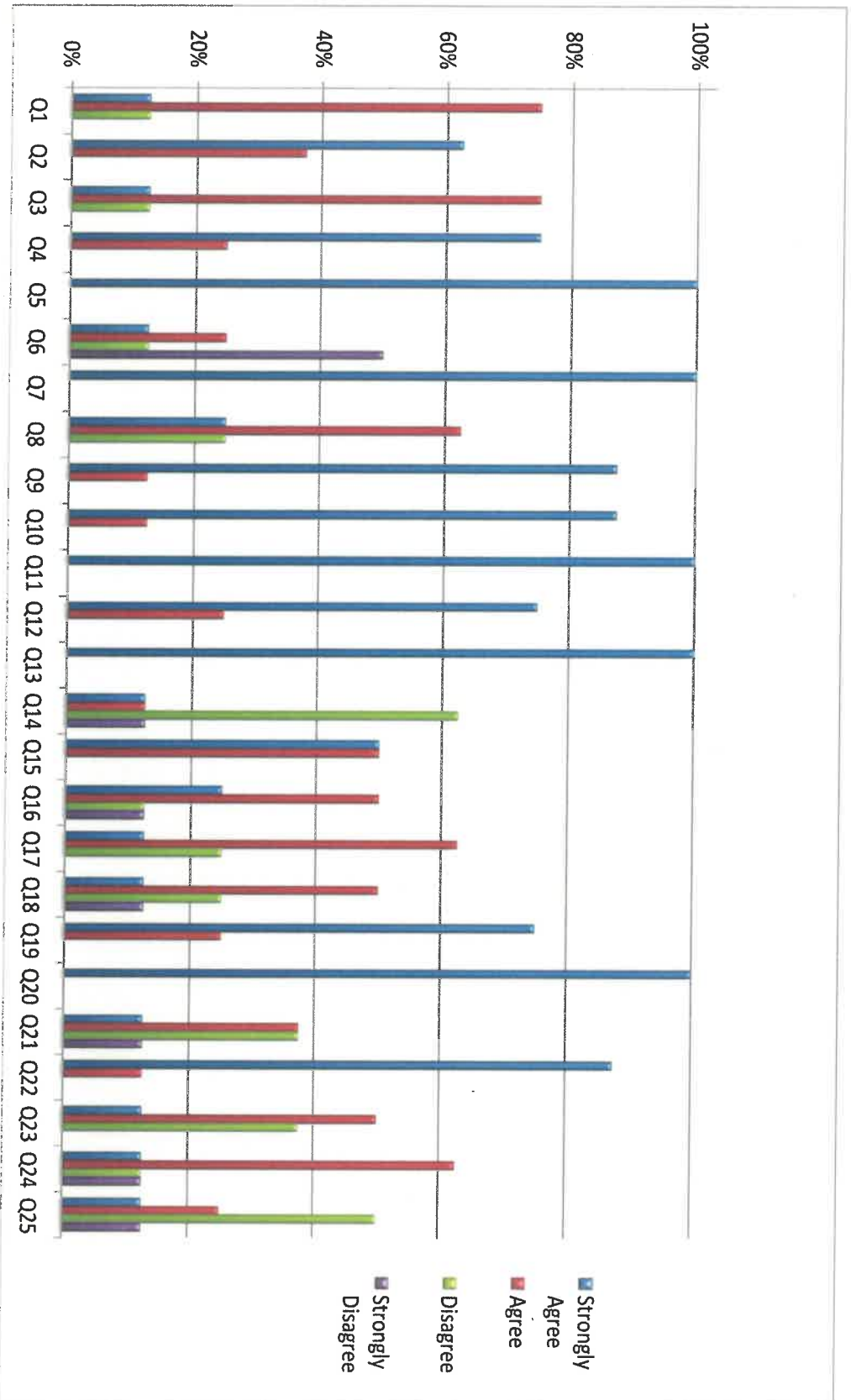
Post-Survey Results by LC - West Focus Group
Concerning Lewis Chapel



Post-Survey Results by Lewis Chapel Focus Group Concerning LC - West



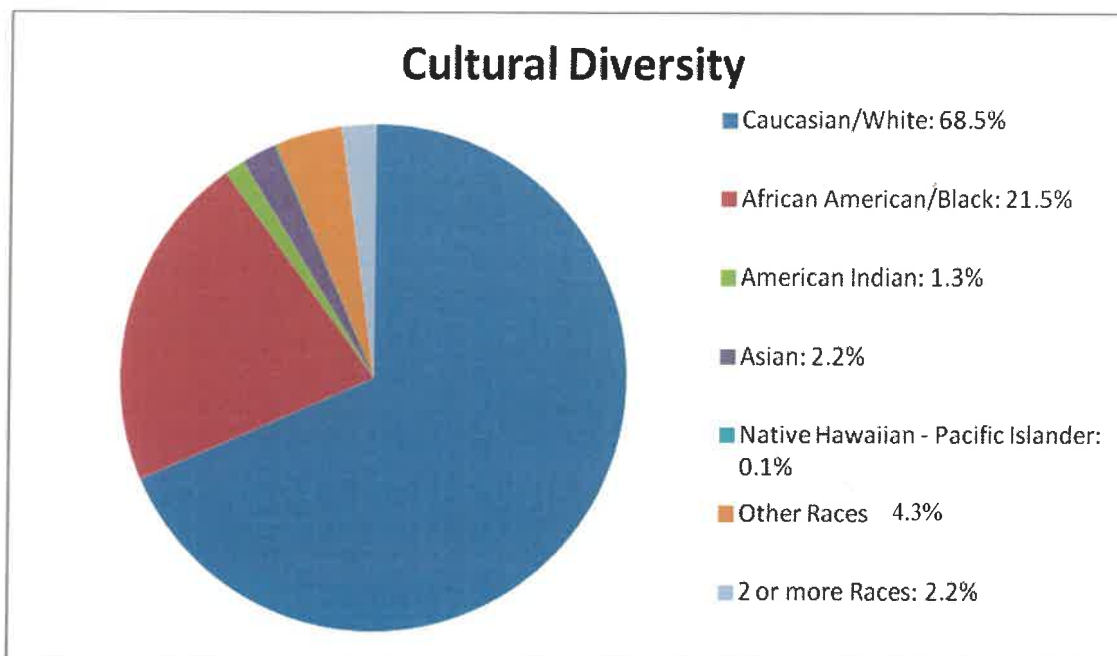
Post-Survey Results by Lewis Chapel Focus Group Concerning Lewis Chapel



APPENDIX J

GRAPHS

Table 1.1 Diversity in the Community



Source: Data from 2010 United States Census

Table 1.2 Average Incomes Per Household

FY 2010 Income Limit Area	Median Income	FY 2010 Income Limit Category	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person
Hoke County	\$44,900	Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits	\$10,600	\$12,100	13,600	\$15,100
		Very Low (50%) Income Limits	\$17,650	\$20,200	\$22,700	\$25,200
		Low (80%) Income Levels	\$28,250	\$32,250	\$36,300	\$40,300

Source: Office of State Budget and Management

Figure A

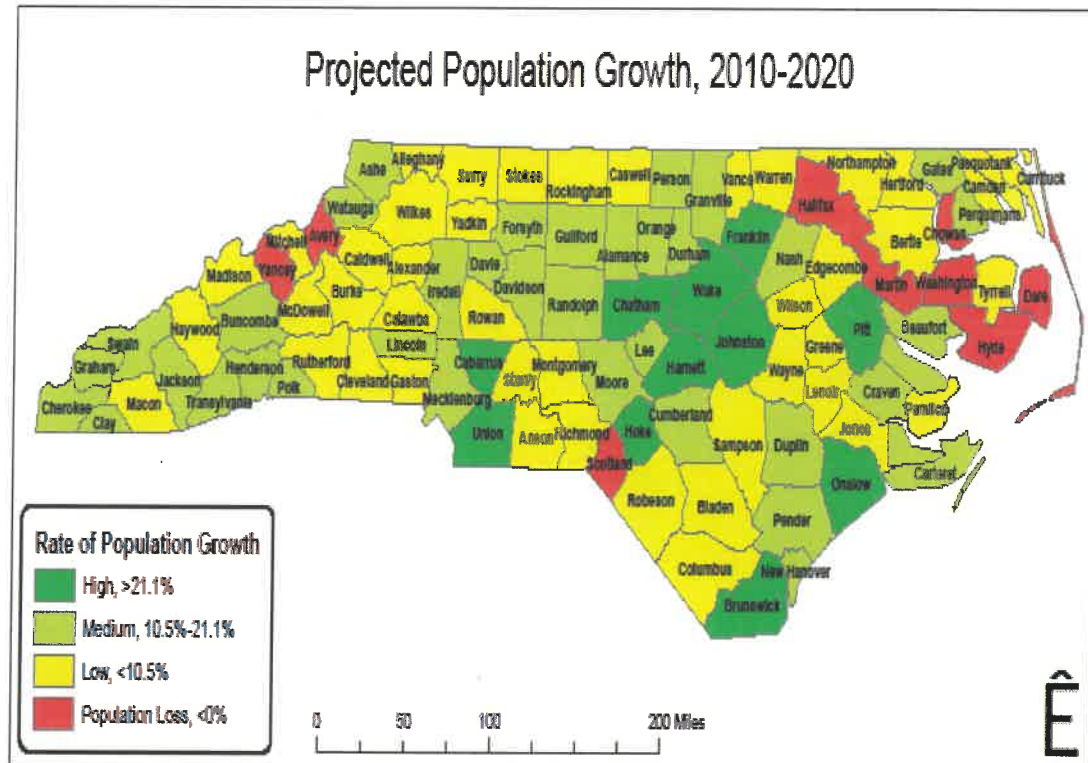
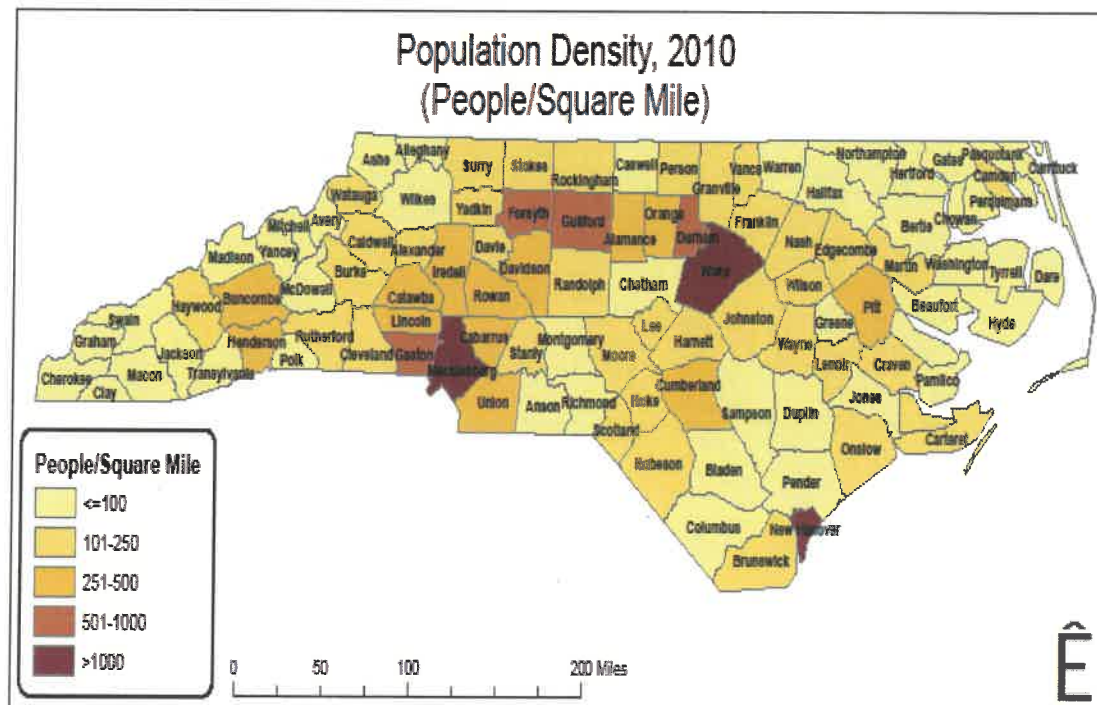


Figure B



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